

A Centaur's Life

13



story & art
KEI MURAYAMA



PRESENTED BY

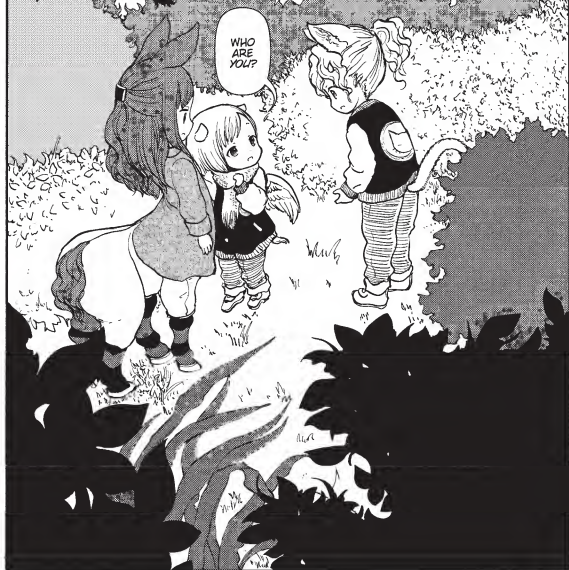
**KEI
MURAYAMA**

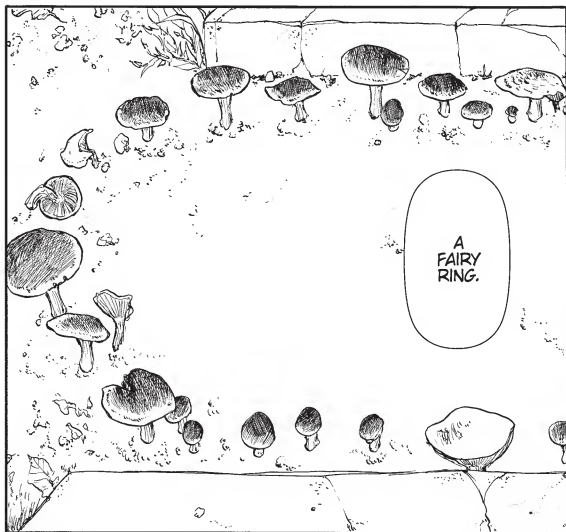
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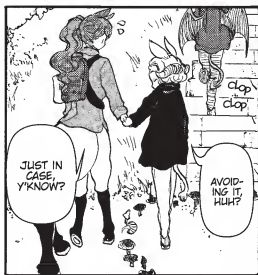
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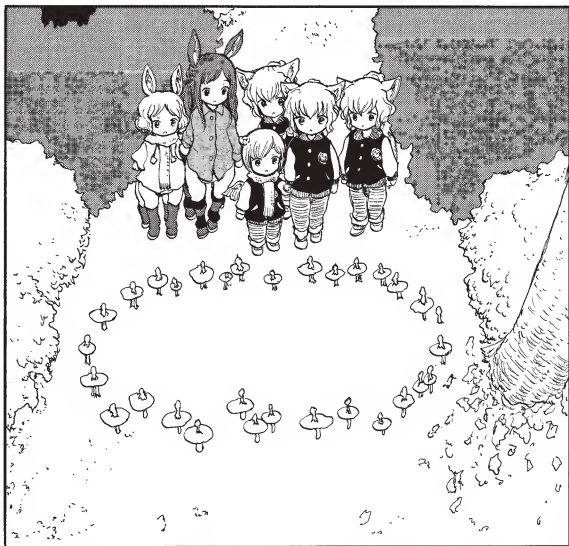


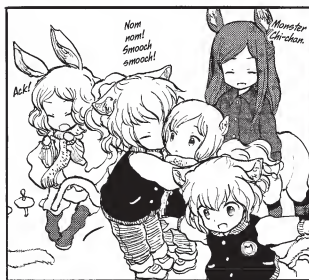
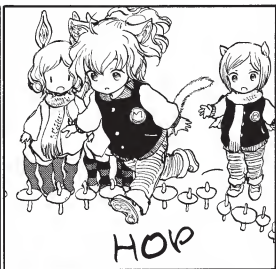
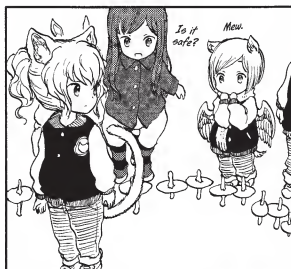
CHAPTER 39

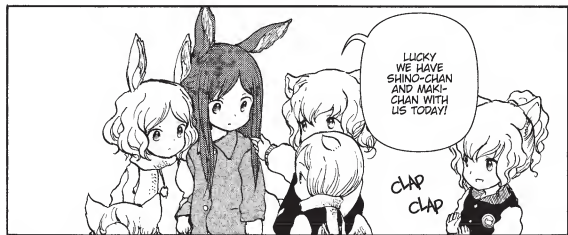


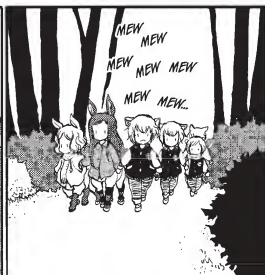
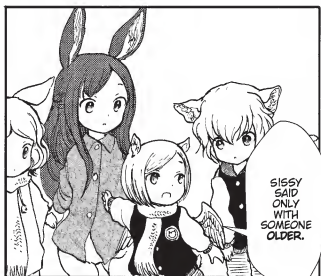


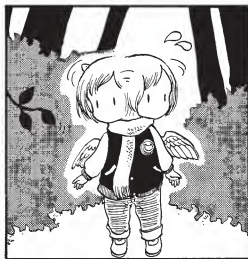


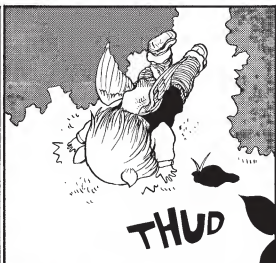


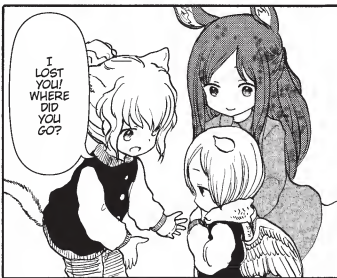
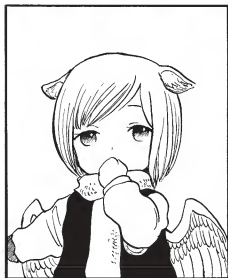
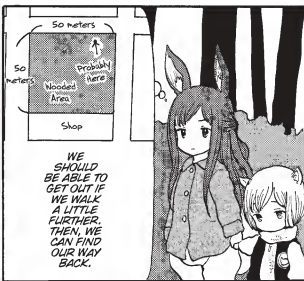
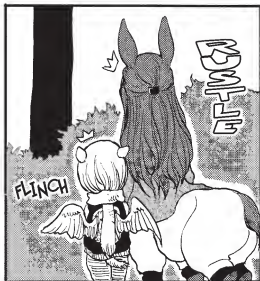


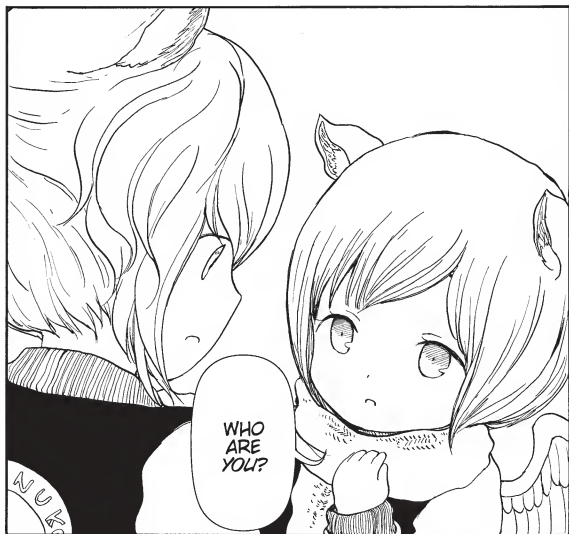


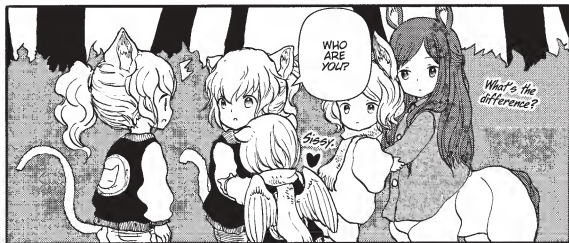
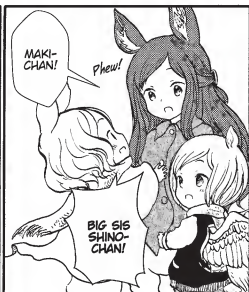


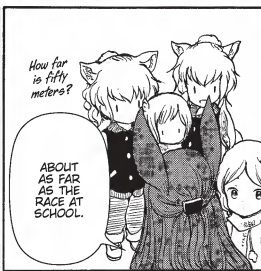
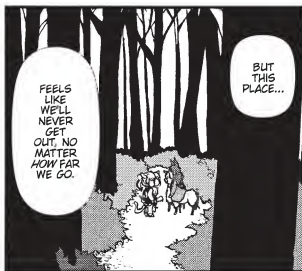
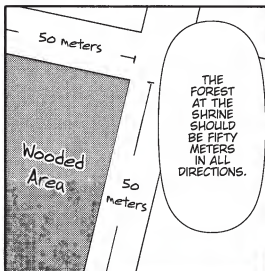


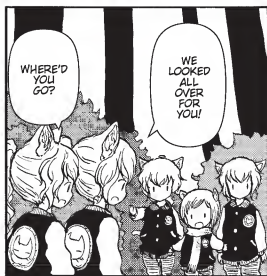
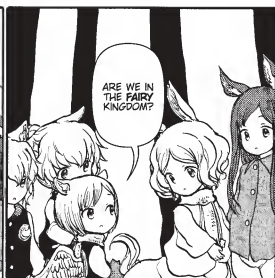






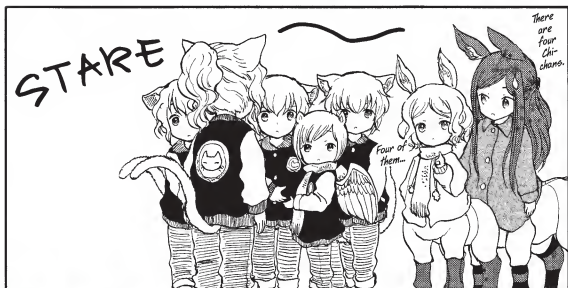
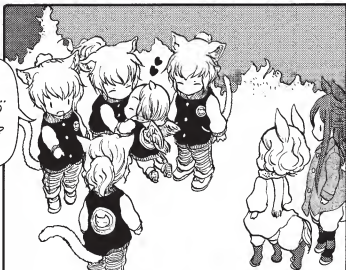


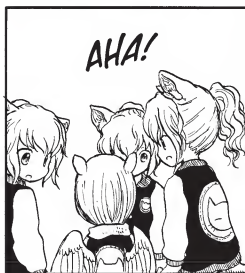
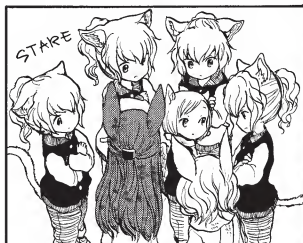


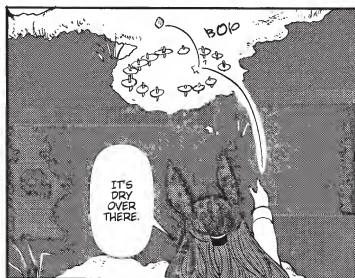
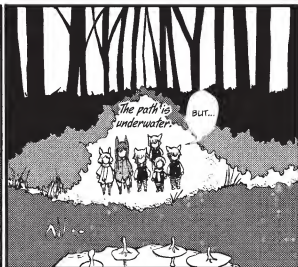
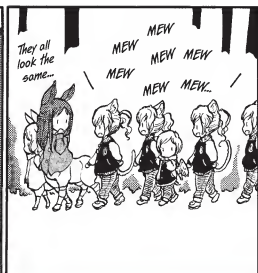
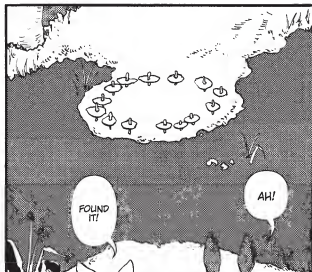


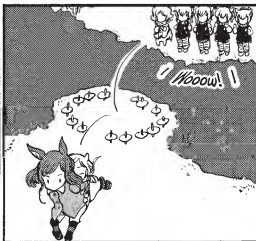
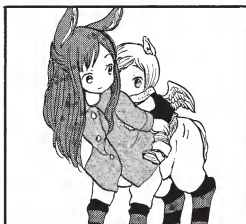


WAIT...
WHO
ARE
YOU?









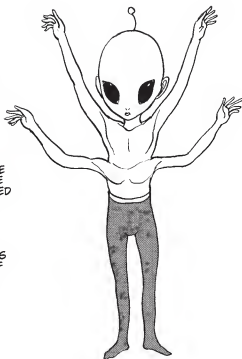
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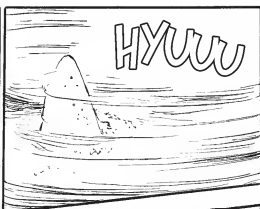
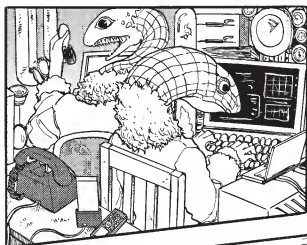
ALIENS - PART 1: WHAT ARE ALIENS?

FROM THE DARKEST PLACES ON OUR PLANET, THOUSANDS OF STARS ARE VISIBLE IN THE NIGHT SKY ABOVE--INDEED, THERE ARE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF THEM BEYOND THE SIGHT OF THE NAKED EYE. OUR OWN PLANET EARTH IS ONLY ONE OF MANY PLANETS CIRCLING THE SUN; THE SUN IS ONLY ONE OF MANY BILLIONS OF STARS THAT COMPRISE OUR GALAXY; OUR GALAXY IS ONLY ONE OF POSSIBLY TRILLIONS OF GALAXIES THAT FORM OUR UNIVERSE.

TO DATE, NO LIFE HAS BEEN DISCOVERED ANYWHERE OTHER THAN EARTH. IN THE GREAT VASTNESS OF THE COSMOS, HOWEVER, IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THERE ARE OTHER STELLAR SYSTEMS WITH PLANETS LIKE EARTH, WHERE LIFE FORMS MAY HAVE EVOLVED. IT'S EVEN POSSIBLE THAT SOME OF THOSE LIFE FORMS MAY HAVE EVOLVED INTO ADVANCED BEINGS, AND PERHAPS EVEN BEINGS THAT ARE CAPABLE OF INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL.

THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE HAS FASCINATED HUMANITY FOR CENTURIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE MOST RECENT DECADES. FROM UFO SIGHTINGS TO GOVERNMENT CONSPIRACY THEORIES, STORIES OF ALIENS ARE PART OF OUR POPULAR CULTURE. MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT ALIENS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN A HOAX OR URBAN LEGEND, BUT THERE ARE SOME WHO TAKE THE STORIES VERY SERIOUSLY... AND THEY MIGHT BE RIGHT.

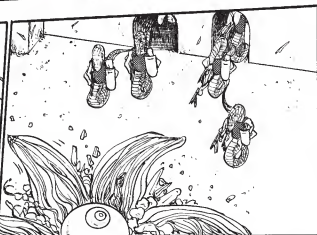
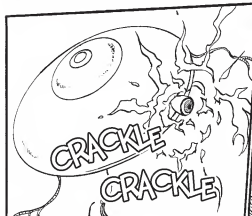
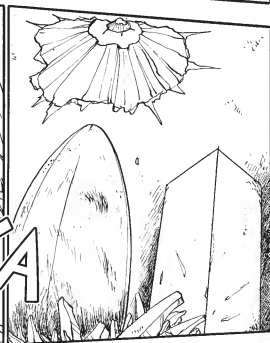
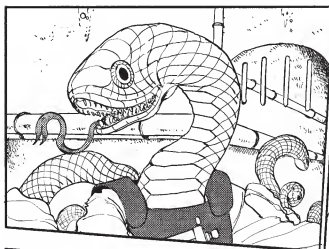




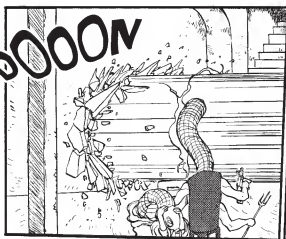
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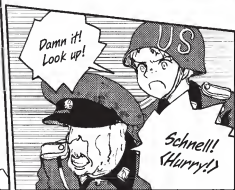
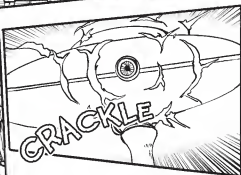
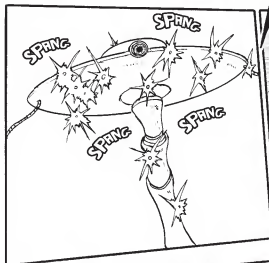
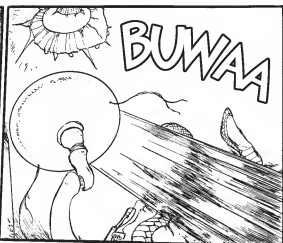
CHAPTER 90

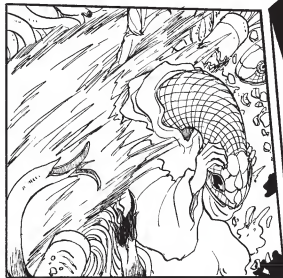
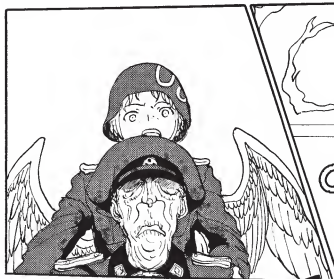
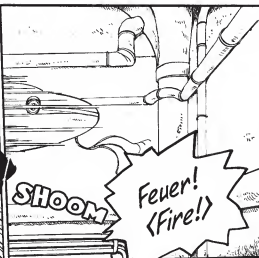


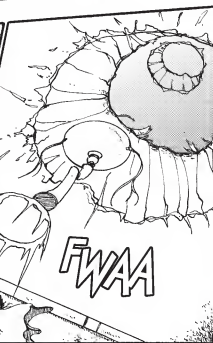
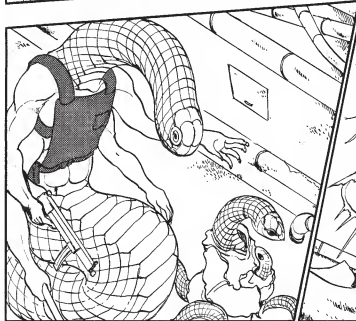
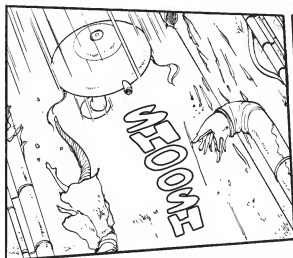
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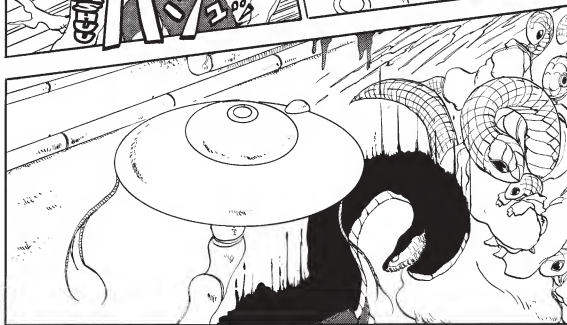
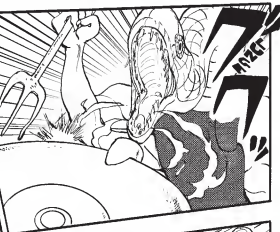
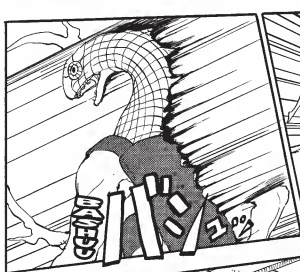
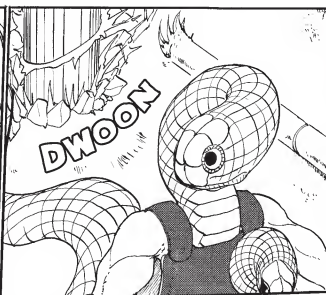
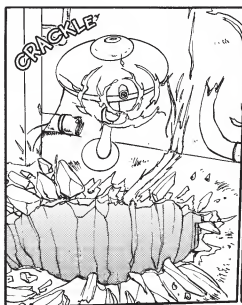


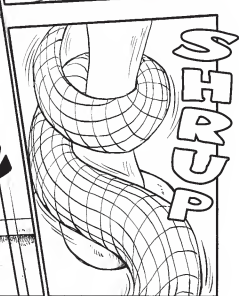
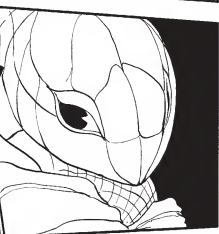
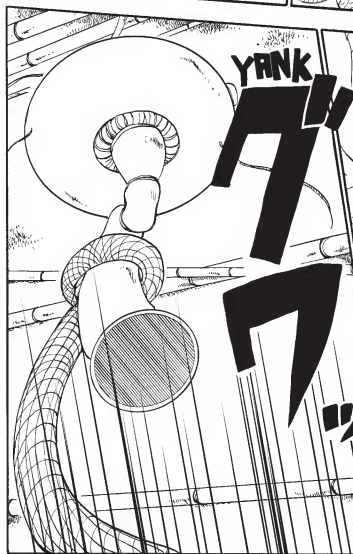
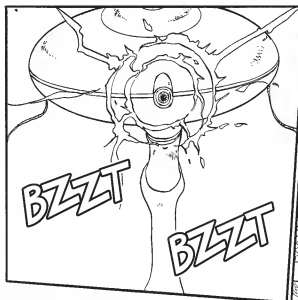
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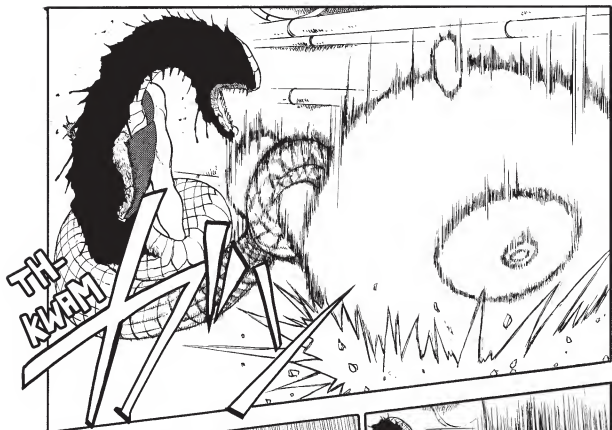


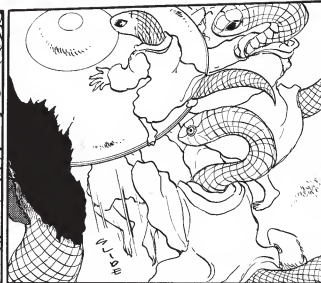
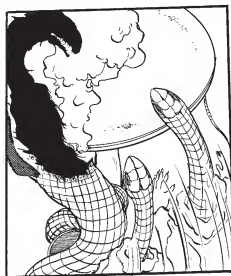
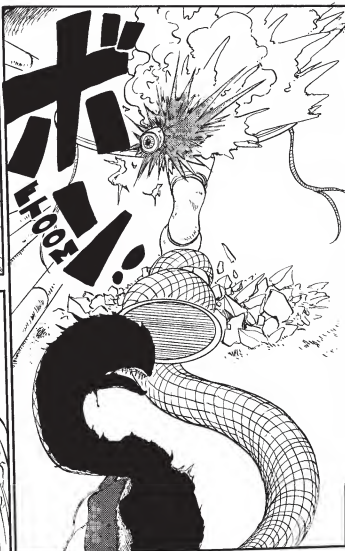
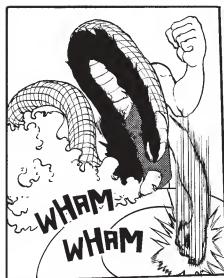


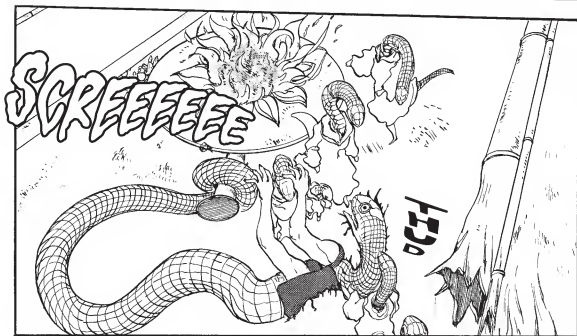


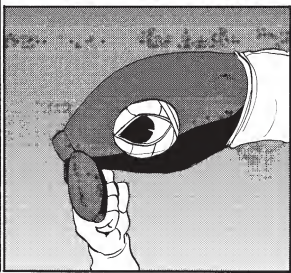
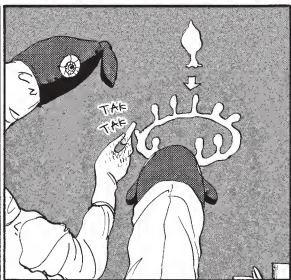
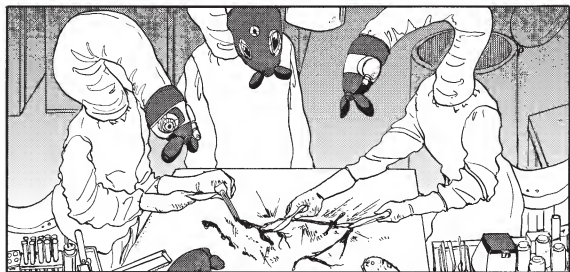


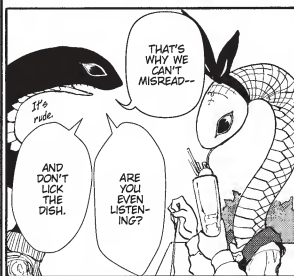
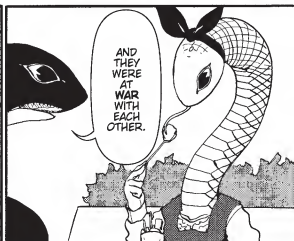
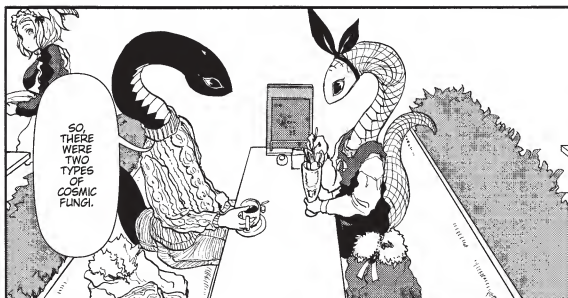












A CentaUr's Life

ALIENS - PART 2: ALIENS IN OUR IMAGINATIONS

HUMANS HAVE PONDERED THE EXISTENCE OF ALIENS SINCE THEY FIRST ACKNOWLEDGED THAT EARTH WAS ONLY ONE OF THE PLANETS IN THEIR SOLAR SYSTEM. NAPOLEON, SKILLED MILITARY STRATEGIST OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, SUPPOSEDLY DEBATED THE POSSIBILITY OF LIFE FORMS ON OTHER PLANETS DURING HIS INVASION OF EGYPT. FOR PARTS OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES, MANY PEOPLE CONSIDERED MARS--A ROCKY PLANET IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM'S HABITABLE ZONE--TO BE A WORLD THAT COULD POTENTIALLY HARBOR ALIEN LIFE FORMS. SOME SCIENTISTS EVEN CLAIMED TO HAVE SPOTTED CANALS ON ITS SURFACE.

THE MARTIANS FOUND IN SCIENCE FICTION WERE SHAPED BY CONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS, AND INSPIRED SOME DEBATE ON THE SCIENTIFIC THEORY OF EVOLUTION (WHICH HAD RELATIVELY RECENTLY CHANGED THE AGE-OLD PERCEPTION THAT HUMANS WERE DIFFERENTIATED FROM ANIMALS). MARTIANS WERE IMAGINED TO HAVE EVOLVED WITH LARGE HEADS AND BODIES AND ATROPHIED DIGESTIVE SYSTEMS, LOOKING MUCH LIKE AN OCTOPLUS.

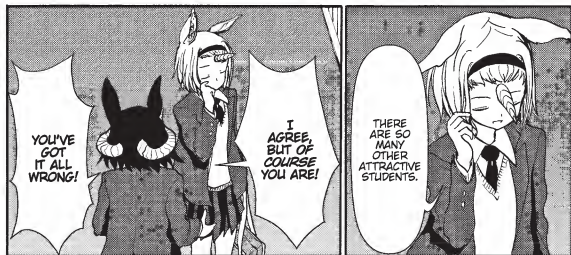
IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT HUMAN CIVILIZATION IS LIKELY LIMITING THE EVOLUTIONARY PROGRESSION OF OUR SPECIES. TO STIMULATE THE EVOLUTION OF HUMANS, ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS MUST BE INTRODUCED TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEARTIER SURVIVAL MECHANISMS. IF MODERN CIVILIZATION MAKES HUMAN LIFE EASIER AND MORE CONVENIENT THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY, FURTHER EVOLUTION THROUGH NATURAL SELECTION AS WE KNOW IT WILL BE DIFFICULT.

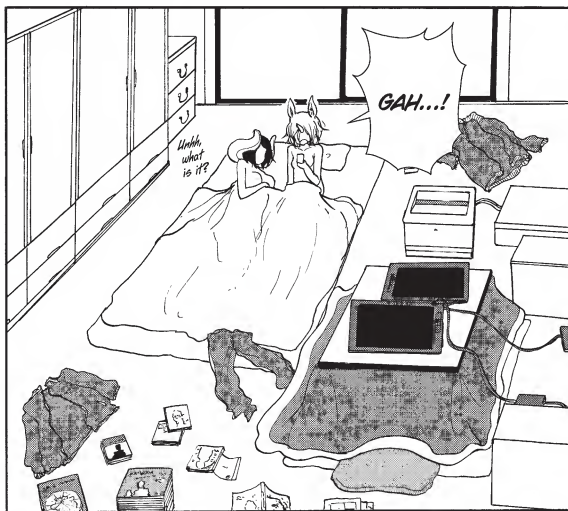
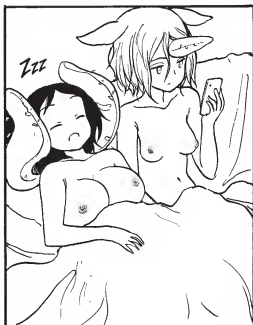
DESPITE THE PREVIOUS POPULARITY OF MARTIANS IN FICTION, CURRENT INFORMATION INDICATES THAT MARS IS A VAST, BARREN WASTELAND WHERE NOT EVEN A SINGLE MICROORGANISM HAS YET BEEN FOUND.

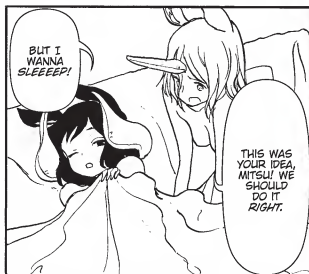
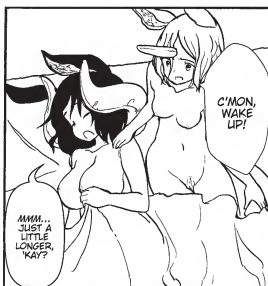




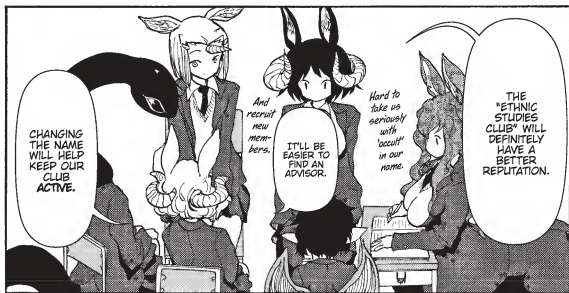
CHAPTER 91

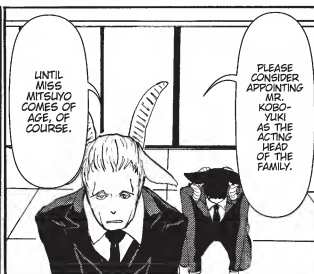
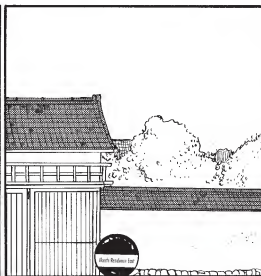
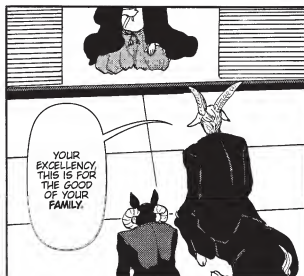




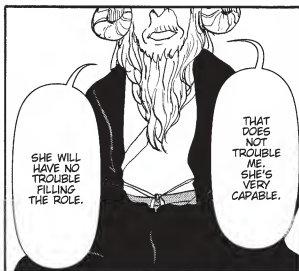






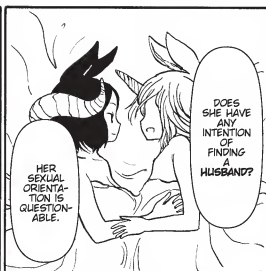






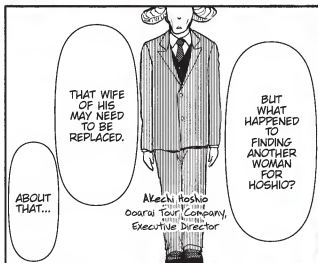
SHE WILL
HAVE NO
TROUBLE
FILLING
THE ROLE.

THAT
DOES
NOT
TROUBLE
ME. SHE'S
VERY
CAPABLE.



HER
SEXUAL
ORIENTA-
TION IS
QUESTIO-
NABLE.

DOES
SHE HAVE
ANY
INTENTION
OF
FINDING
A
HUSBAND?



THAT WIFE
OF HIS
MAY NEED
TO BE
REPLACED.

BUT
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO
FINDING
ANOTHER
WOMAN
FOR
HOSHIO?

ABOUT
THAT...

Akechi Hoshio
Ooarai Tour Company,
Executive Director



SO, SHE
IS FREE
TO LOVE
AS SHE
CHOOSES.
THAT'S
WHAT
YOUNG
PEOPLE
DO.



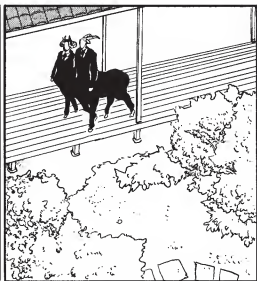
HE
ONLY
EXCELS
AT
BEING
INSIPID.

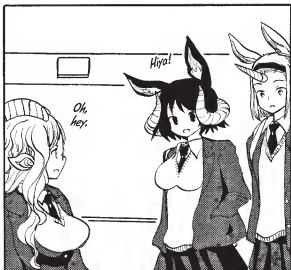
TSK...
UNDER
HIS
WIFE'S
THUMB,
THEN.

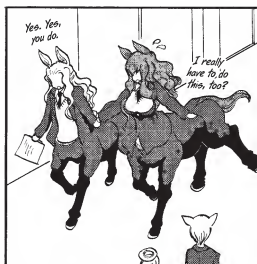


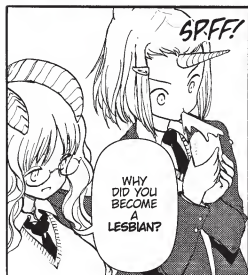
WE HAVE
TRIED MANY
TACTICS, BUT
TO NO AVAIL.
HE WON'T
EVEN DRINK
ALCOHOL.

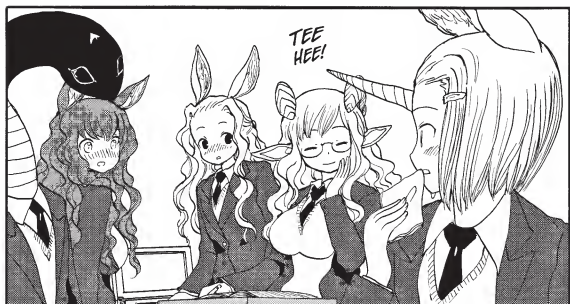
MR.
HOSHIO
SEEMS
TO BE
THE IDEAL
HUSBAND.

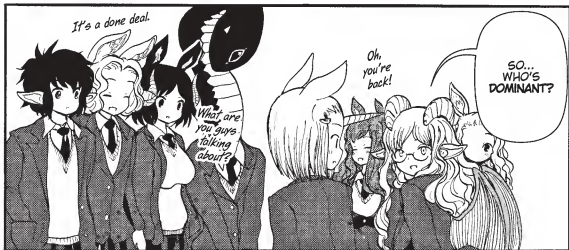


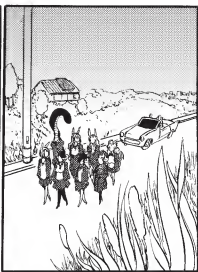


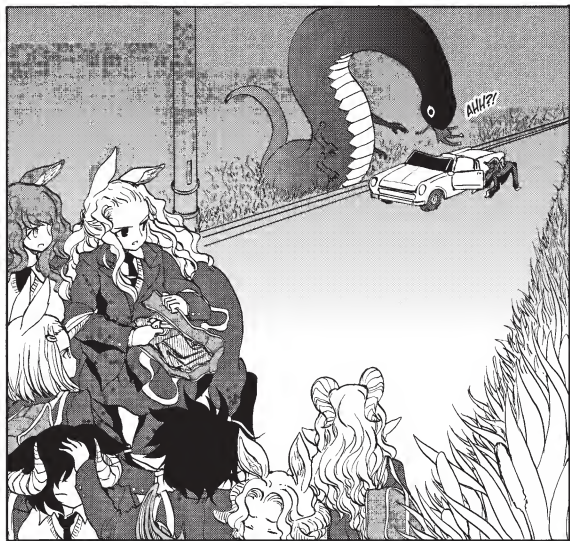


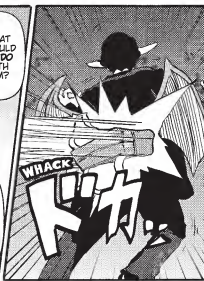
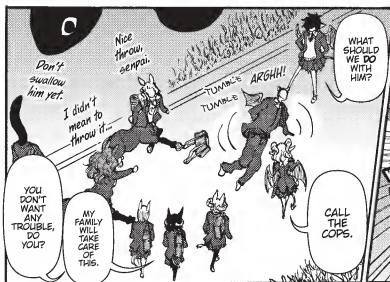
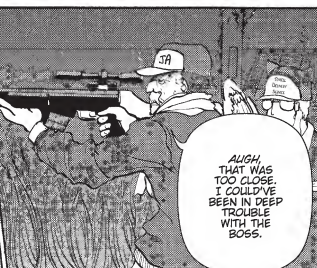
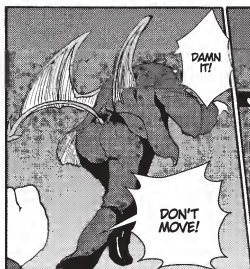
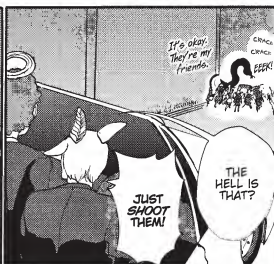
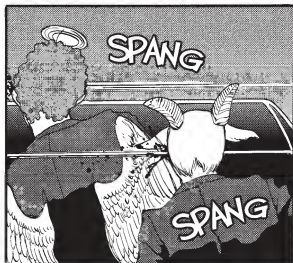


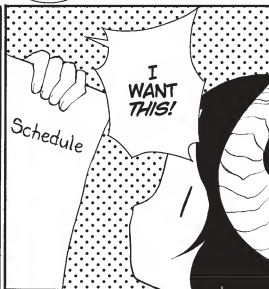












A CentaUr's Life

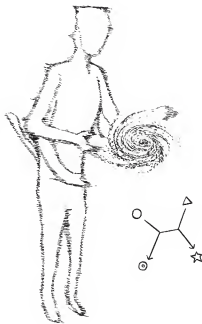
ALIENS - PART 3: UNACKNOWLEDGED ALIENS

THE MARTIANS MENTIONED IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER STILL HAD SOME SIMILARITIES TO HUMANS, DESPITE THEIR HETEROMORPHIC APPEARANCE. THEIR HEIGHTS WERE MEASURED IN METERS, WHICH WOULD MAKE THEM HIGHLY VISIBLE LIFE FORMS.

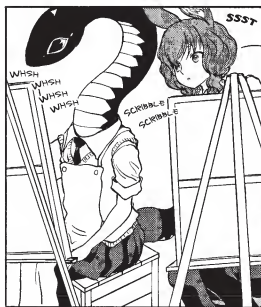
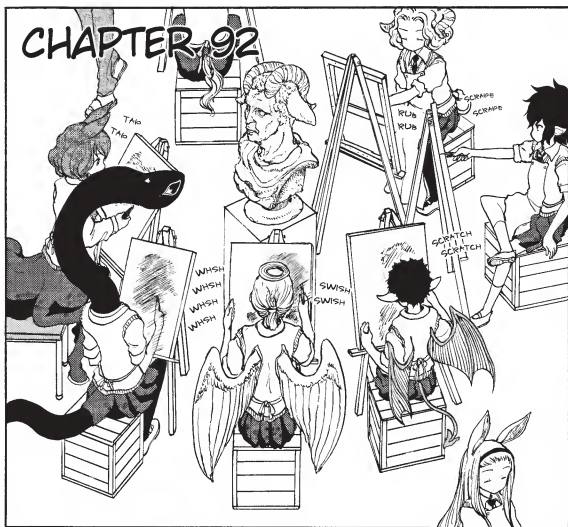
BUT IN THE INFINITE COSMOS, THERE MAY BE INTELLIGENT LIFE THAT GOES BEYOND THE SCOPE OF OUR IMAGINATIONS. THIS CONCEPT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO GRASP, BUT LET'S BEGIN BY CONSIDERING POSSIBLE LIFE FORMS OF VARYING SIZE. AN ORGANISM THE SIZE OF A HUMAN MAY BE INCONCEIVABLE TO AN ORGANISM AS SMALL AS AN ATOM. SIMILARLY, AN ORGANISM AS LARGE AS A NEUTRON STAR IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO IMAGINE.

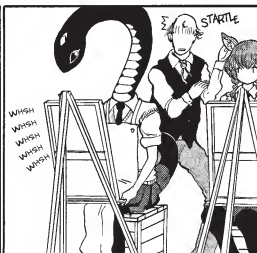
ONE OF THE RAMIFICATIONS OF SUCH A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN SIZE COULD BE A VERY DIFFERENT PERCEPTION OF TIME. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE UNIVERSE, HUMAN CIVILIZATION HAS ONLY EXISTED FOR THE BRIEFEST FRACTION OF A MOMENT. IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THERE ARE ORGANISMS WITH VERY SHORT LIFESPANS FROM A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE, AND THE HISTORY OF THEIR ENTIRE CIVILIZATION COULD SEEM QUITE BRIEF IN COMPARISON. IF THAT'S THE CASE, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR US TO PICK UP ANY SIGNAL THEY TRIED TO SEND US, NOT TO MENTION THE EXCEEDINGLY LONG TIME THAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR US TO RESPOND FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE.

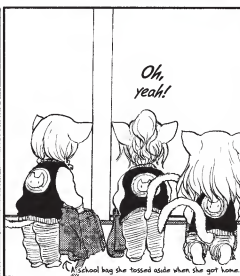
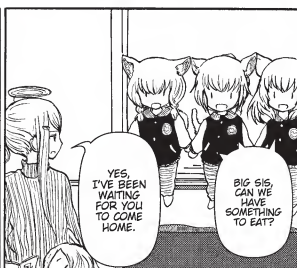
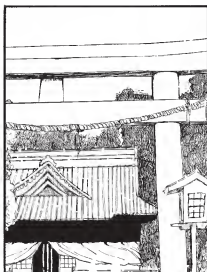
ANOTHER FACTOR TO CONSIDER IS THAT AN ALIEN SIGNAL COULD BE COMPOSED OF DARK MATTER OR DARK ENERGY. THE UNIVERSE IS APPROXIMATELY 27% DARK MATTER AND 68% DARK ENERGY, AND WE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT EITHER; AT PRESENT, THEY CAN ONLY BE INDIRECTLY CALCULATED FROM WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE. ORGANISMS MADE OF DARK MATTER MAY NOT REQUIRE AN EARTH-LIKE PLANET. SINCE DARK MATTER CANNOT CURRENTLY BE DETECTED, SUCH ORGANISMS MAY NOT APPEAR TO EXIST TO ORGANISMS MADE OF ORDINARY MATTER.

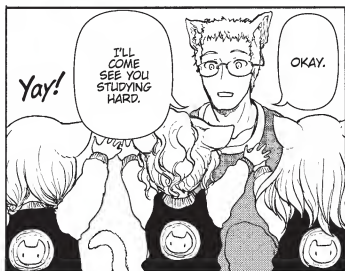
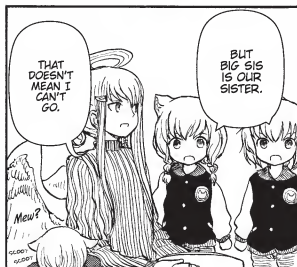
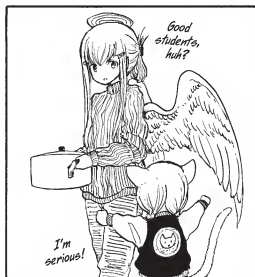


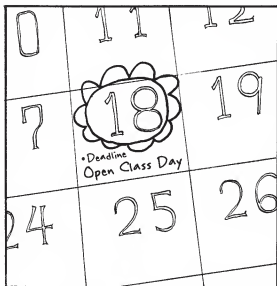
CHAPTER 92

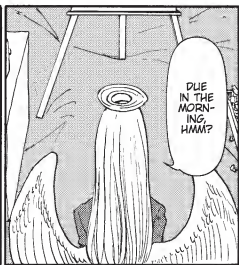
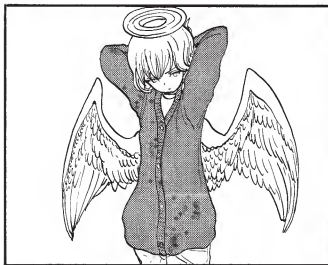
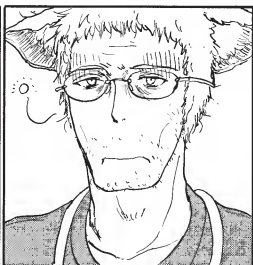
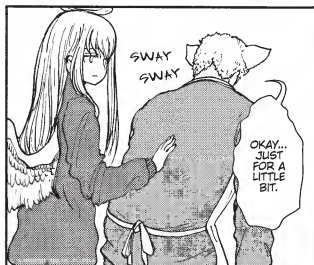
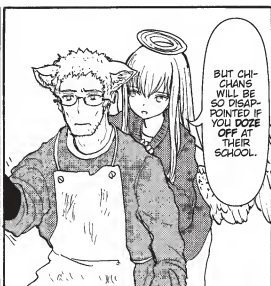


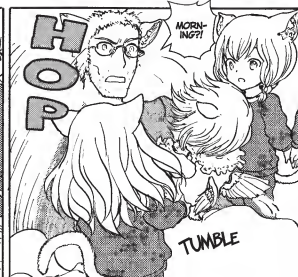
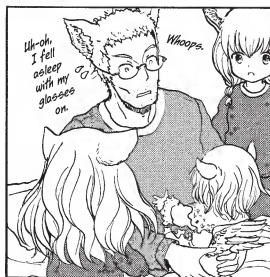




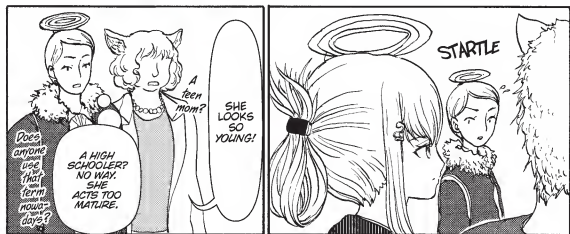


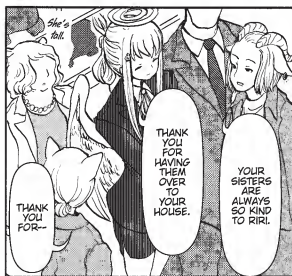
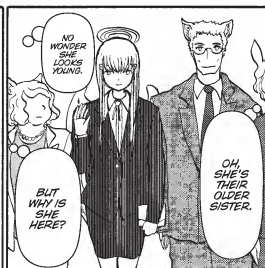
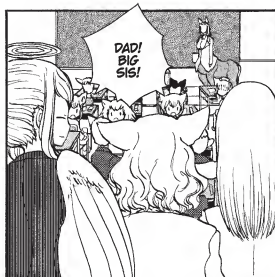


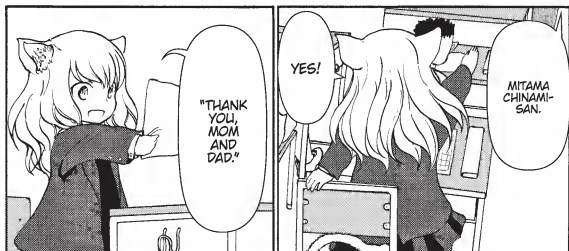


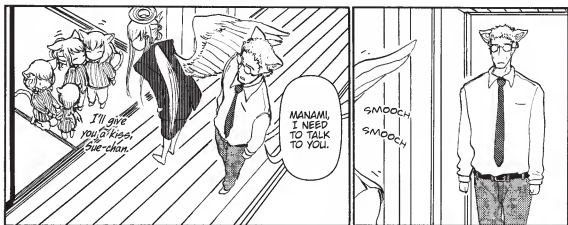
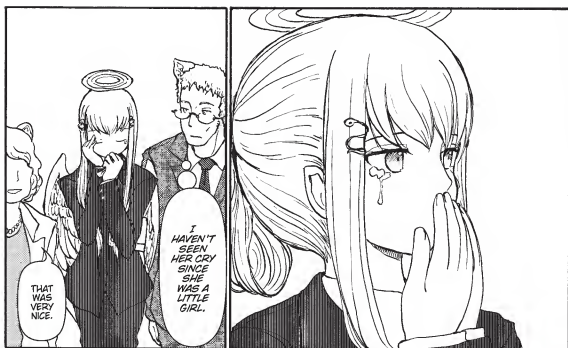




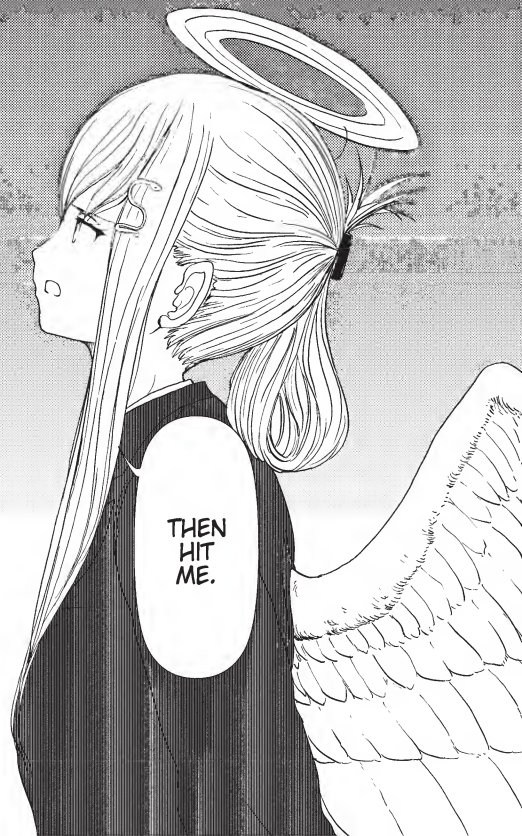




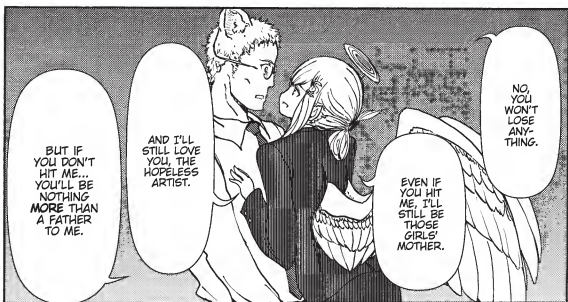
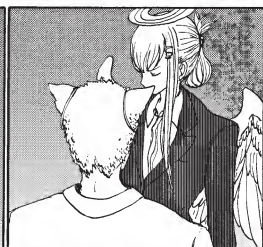








THEN
HIT
ME.



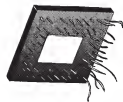
A CentaUr's Life

ALIENS - PART 4: SILICON-BASED LIFE FORMS

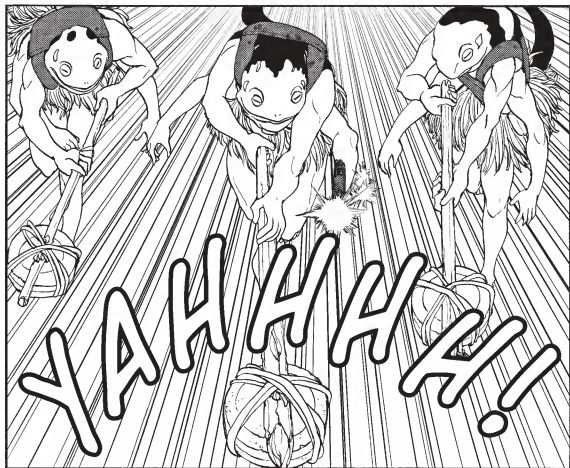
ORGANISMS ON EARTH ARE CONSIDERED "CARBON-BASED" BECAUSE ASIDE FROM WATER, THEIR BODIES ARE MOSTLY MADE UP OF CARBON COMPOUNDS. IF YOU LOOK AT THE PERIODIC TABLE, CARBON IS IN THE FIFTH COLUMN FROM THE RIGHT. THIS INDICATES THAT CARBON HAS FOUR VALENCE ELECTRONS, WHICH MEANS THAT IT CAN CREATE FOUR BONDS TO FORM MULTIPLE COMPOUNDS. THIS ABILITY TO CONSTRUCT COMPLEX MACROMOLECULES IS WHAT MAKES CARBON AN ESSENTIAL BUILDING BLOCK FOR ORGANISMS. BUT JUST BECAUSE CARBON IS THE ESSENCE OF LIFE ON EARTH DOESN'T MEAN THAT IT'S THE ONLY POSSIBILITY; IN FACT, THERE'S AN ELEMENT WITH SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS ON THE PERIODIC TABLE. IT MUST HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF VALENCE ELECTRONS, MEANING THAT IT MUST BE IN THE SAME COLUMN AS CARBON...AND RIGHT BELOW CARBON, WE FIND SILICON.

ALTHOUGH SILICON HAS SIMILARITIES TO CARBON, THERE ARE DIFFERENCES AS WELL. SILICON CAN'T FORM MULTIPLE MOLECULES IN AN ENVIRONMENT LIKE THOSE IDEAL FOR LIFE ON EARTH THE WAY THAT CARBON CAN. EVEN IF LIVING MATTER WERE TO BE COMPOSED OF SILICON, IT WOULD ONLY BE AN EMPTY SHELL, DEVOID OF BIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY. A TRULY SILICON-BASED LIFE FORM WOULD PROBABLY BE MOST SUCCESSFUL IN AN ENVIRONMENT TOO HOT FOR ORGANIC CARBON COMPOUNDS.

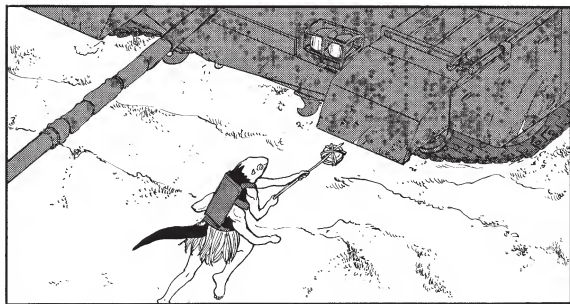
IT MAY BE POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, TO CREATE A HIGHLY INTELLIGENT SILICON-BASED LIFE FORM. COMPUTER CHIPS ARE MADE OF SILICON; IF A COMPUTER EVER GAINS SELF-AWARENESS, THEN IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED A SILICON-BASED LIFE FORM. IT'S CONCEIVABLE THAT CARBON-BASED LIFE FORMS PRE-DATING HUMANS MAY HAVE ALREADY CREATED SILICON-BASED LIFE FORMS IN THE DISTANT PAST. IN OUR CURRENT TIME, HUMANS ARE JUST BEGINNING TO INVENT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, BUT THE HISTORY OF LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE MAY BE REPEATING ITSELF.

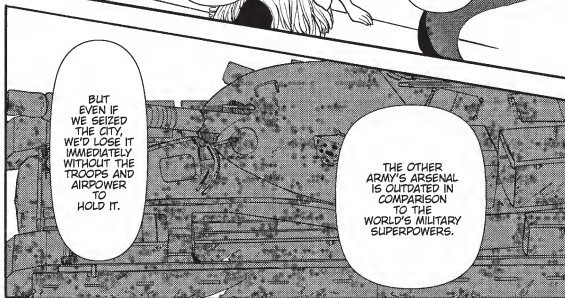
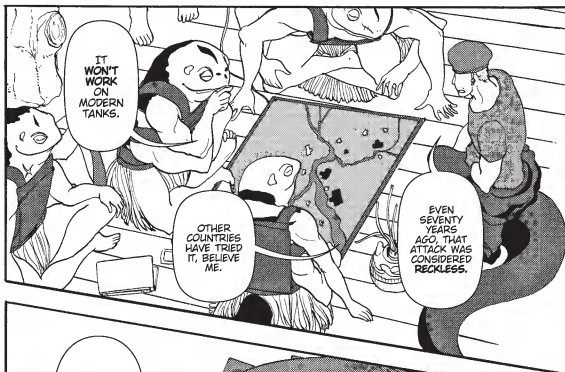
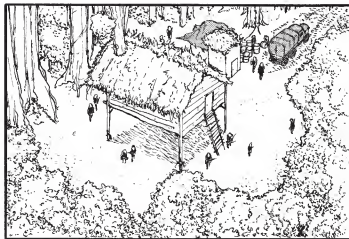


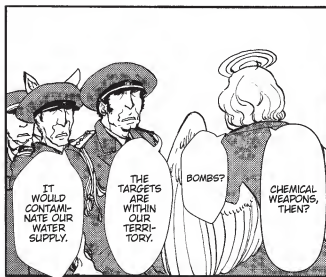
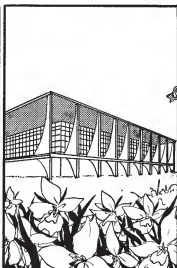
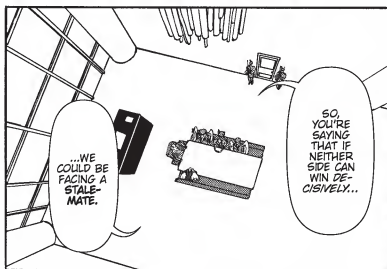
	14	15
6	C Carbon 12.01	
14	Si Silicon 28.09	
32	Ge Germanium 72.64	

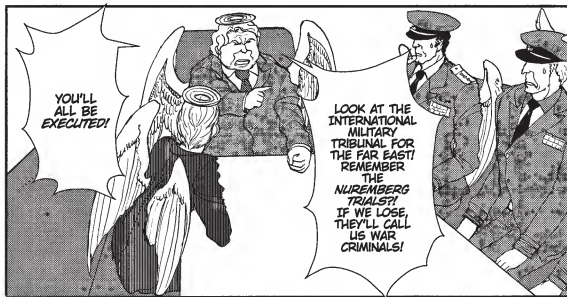
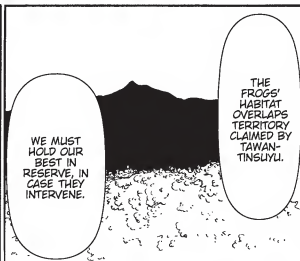
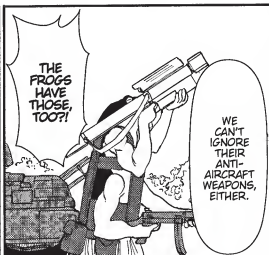
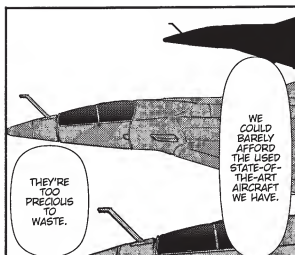


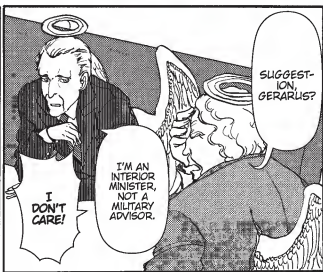
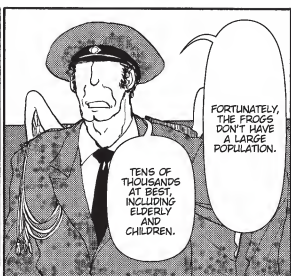
CHAPTER 93

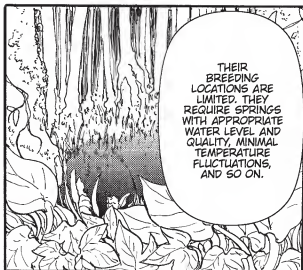












THEIR BREEDING LOCATIONS ARE LIMITED. THEY REQUIRE SPRINGS WITH APPROPRIATE WATER LEVEL AND QUALITY, MINIMAL TEMPERATURE FLUCTUATIONS, AND SO ON.



THEY DON'T GIVE LIVE BIRTH LIKE WE DO. MAKES THEM VULNERABLE.

IS THERE A PLAN IN THIS BIOLOGY LESSON?

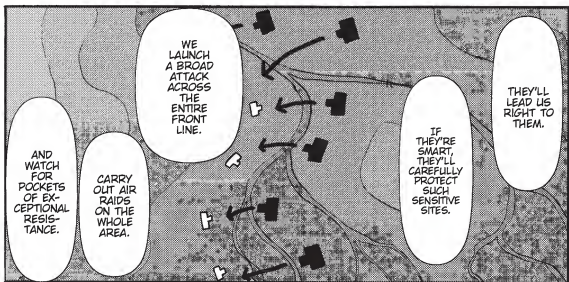


AERIAL AND SATELLITE IMAGES WON'T HELP MUCH, IN THE JUNGLE.

BUT HOW DO WE FIND THEM?



IF WE TARGET THE SPRINGS, THE ADVANTAGE WILL BE OURS.



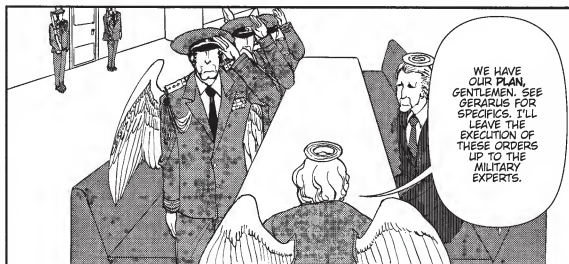
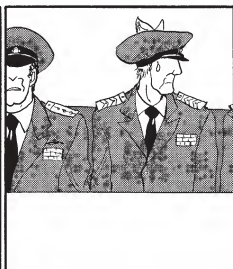
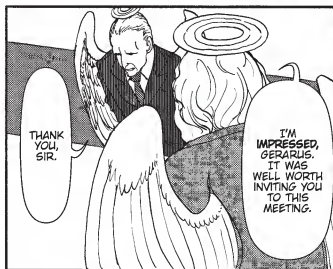
WE LAUNCH A BROAD ATTACK ACROSS THE ENTIRE FRONT LINE.

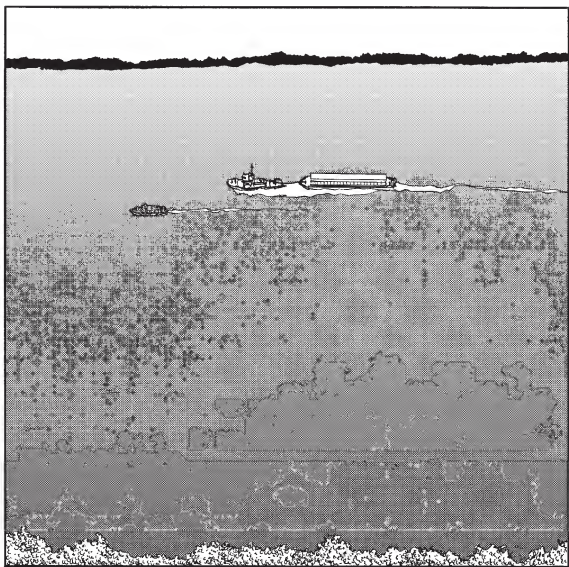
AND WATCH FOR POCKETS OF EXCEPTIONAL RESISTANCE.

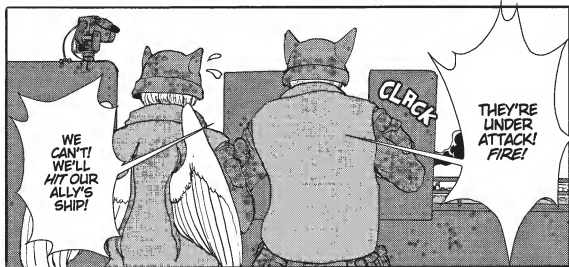
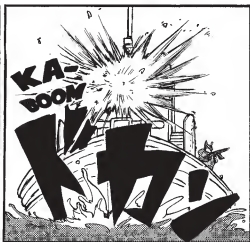
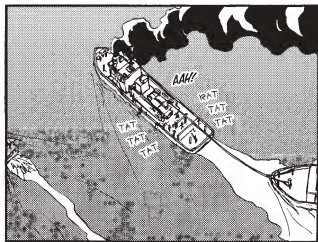
CARRY OUT AIR RAIDS ON THE WHOLE AREA.

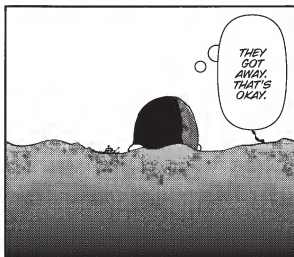
IF THEY'RE SMART, THEY'LL CAREFULLY PROTECT SUCH SENSITIVE SITES.

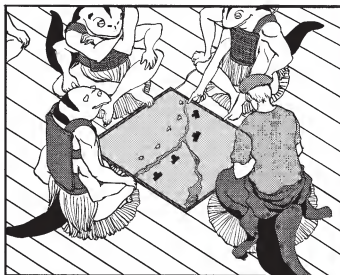
THEY'LL LEAD US TO THEM.





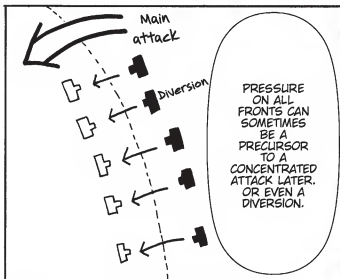








WE TOOK OVER THEIR BROADCAST SIGNAL AND RELEASED OUR TERMS OF PEACE ON THE AIR.

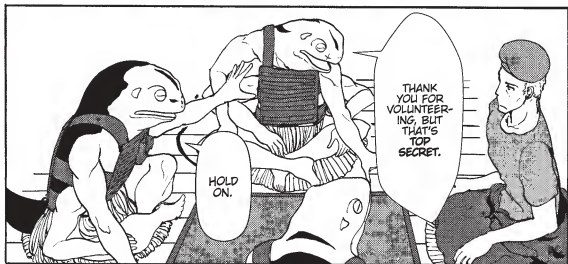




UNLESS
YOU HAVE
TERRITORY
THAT IS
CRUCIAL
TO
YOU...?

UNLESS
YOU'RE
PLANNING
TO
SURROUND
AND
DESTROY
THEM,
THERE'S
NO POINT
IN TRYING
TO SEIZE
TERRITORY.

IN A
GUERRILLA
STRATEGY,
THE
FORCES
WILL
BACK
OFF IF
YOU
ATTACK
THEM.
AND VICE
VERSA.



HOLD
ON.

THANK
YOU FOR
VOLLINTEER-
ING, BUT
THAT'S
TOP
SECRET.



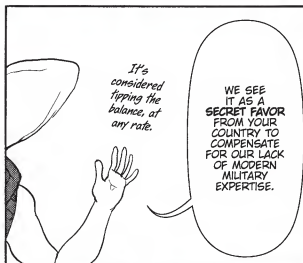
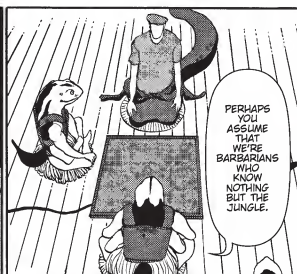
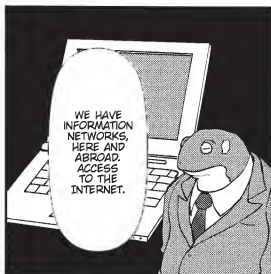
You
know
my
real
name.

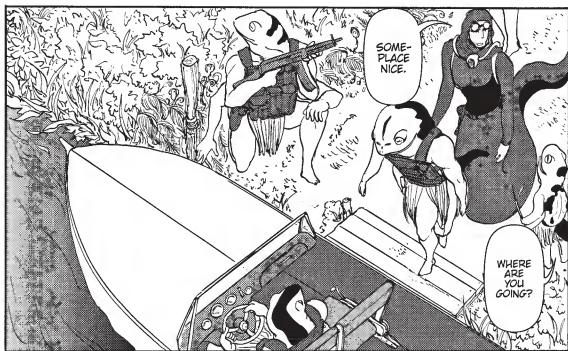
OH! DID
I GIVE
MYSELF
AWAY?

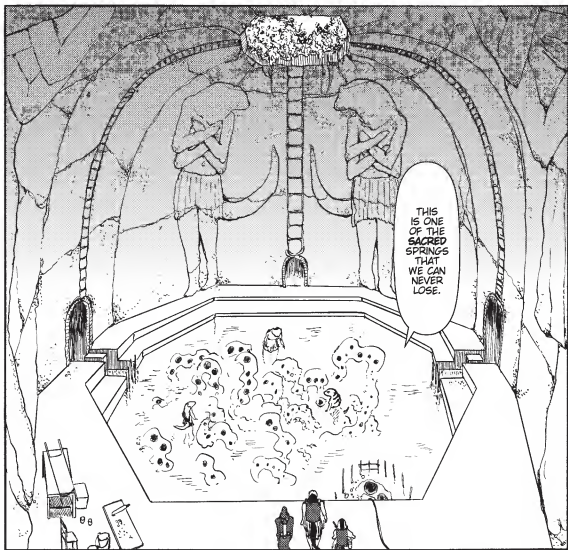
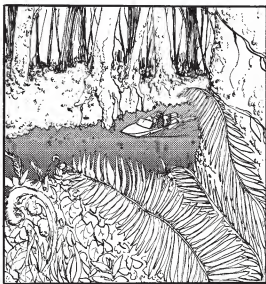
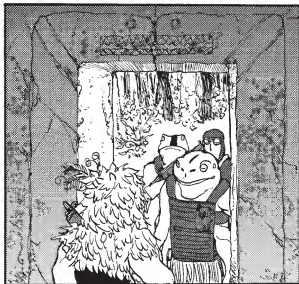


IT
WOULD
BE RUDE
TO SEE
YOU AS
SIMPLY A
MYSTERIOUS
WOULD-BE
EXPLORER.

YOU
HAVE
AN
EXCELLENT
REPUTA-
TION
AS A
SOLDIER,
MR.
MIURA.







A CentaUr's Life

ALIENS - PART 5: A BODY SIZE REQUIRED FOR INTELLIGENCE

IN THE PREVIOUS SECTION, WE DISCUSSED LIFE FORMS FROM ENVIRONMENTS THAT DIFFER FROM EARTH, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE THAT COULD EVOLVE ON AN EARTH-LIKE WORLD? ALTHOUGH THESE ORGANISMS MAY HAVE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CELLULAR STRUCTURES, IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THEY WOULD LOOK SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO HUMANS. CONSIDER LIFE ON EARTH: THERE ARE ANIMALS FROM ENTIRELY DIFFERENT EVOLUTIONARY BRANCHES THAT INDEPENDENTLY EVOLVED SIMILAR TRAITS AND ADAPTATIONS, SUCH AS DOLPHINS, FISH, AND ICHTHYOSAURS. THERE'S NO REASON TO THINK THAT THIS PHENOMENON, CALLED CONVERGENT EVOLUTION, COULDN'T HAPPEN BETWEEN LIFE FORMS FROM DIFFERENT WORLDS.

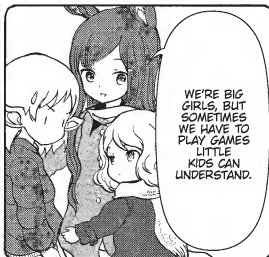
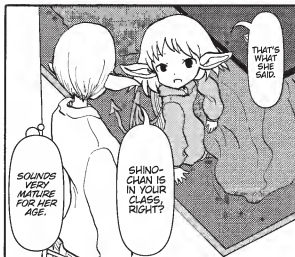
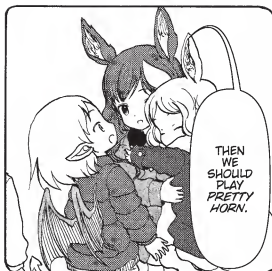
HOW CAN WE KNOW WHICH LIFE FORMS WILL EVOLVE ADVANCED INTELLIGENCE? THE PRIMARY REQUIREMENT FOR ADVANCED INTELLIGENCE IS A LARGE BRAIN, OR ANOTHER ORGAN THAT FILLS A SIMILAR FUNCTION. A COCKROACH, FOR EXAMPLE, IS KNOWN TO HAVE AN ORGAN THAT FUNCTIONS LIKE A BRAIN: IF THIS ORGAN TEMPORARILY STOPS FUNCTIONING, THE COCKROACH WILL SUFFER MEMORY LOSS MUCH LIKE A HUMAN WOULD, WITH THE IMMEDIATE LOSS OF SHORT-TERM MEMORY BUT RETENTION OF LONG-TERM MEMORY. THIS, HOWEVER, DOESN'T MEAN THAT INSECTS ARE CAPABLE OF ADVANCED INTELLIGENCE. ALTHOUGH THEY CAN FORM MEMORIES, MOST OF THEIR BRAIN FUNCTIONS SEEM TO BE LIMITED TO INSTINCT. THE FACT THAT THEIR EXOSKELETON AND BREATHING METHODS LIMIT THEIR POTENTIAL FOR BODY AND BRAIN GROWTH MAKES THE NECESSARY CHANGES UNLIKELY.

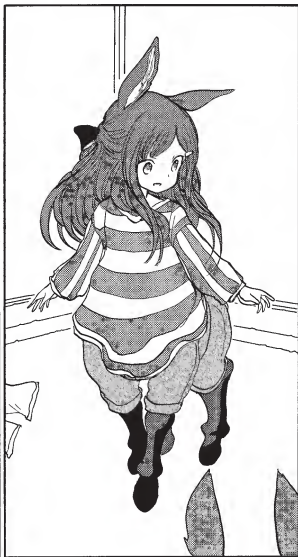
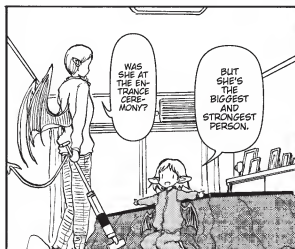
UNLIKE INSECT BRAINS, MAMMALIAN BRAINS ARE LARGER AND REQUIRE A CONSISTENT BODY TEMPERATURE, MEANING THAT THE BODY MUST BURN MORE CALORIES TO FUEL THE BRAIN. IN EXCHANGE, HOWEVER, MAMMALS ARE MORE CAPABLE OF LEARNING NEW BEHAVIORS TO ADAPT TO THEIR ENVIRONMENTS, MAKING THEM MORE VERSATILE ORGANISMS. MAMMALIAN HUMANS HAVE THIS CHARACTERISTIC AS WELL; THEORETICALLY, SO DO ANTARCTICANS AND AMPHIBIANFOLK, WHOSE BRAINS ARE ALSO CAPABLE OF IMAGINATION AND ABSTRACT IDEAS. IF YOU CONSIDER THE SIMILARITIES OF HEIGHT BETWEEN HUMANS, ANTARCTICANS, AND AMPHIBIANFOLK, THEN THE NOTION THAT EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE FORMS WITH ADVANCED INTELLIGENCE MAY SHARE THE SAME HEIGHT AND METABOLIC RATE AS HUMANS BECOMES LESS FAR-FETCHED.

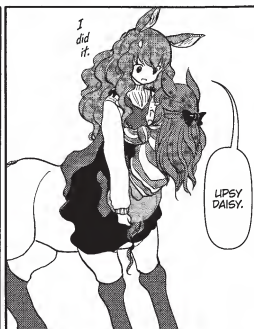
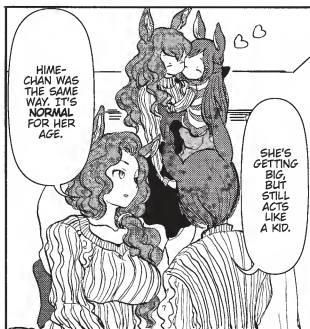
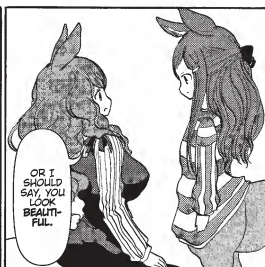


CHAPTER 94









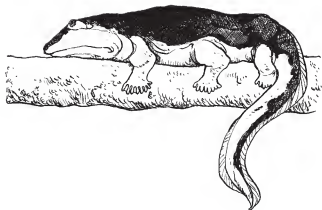
A CentaUr's Life

ALIENS - PART 6: NUMBER OF LIMBS AND DIGITS

LET'S CONSIDER AN INTELLIGENT EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE FORM THAT EVOLVES IN AN EARTH-LIKE ENVIRONMENT. TERRESTRIAL SPECIES WOULD LIKELY HAVE SENSORY ORGANS LOCATED HIGHER ON THE BODY, AS IS THE CASE ON EARTH. INTELLIGENCE COMES WITH GREATER ABILITY TO MANIPULATE THE ENVIRONMENT, SO SUCH CREATURES PROBABLY ALSO POSSESS ONE TO THREE PAIRS OF LIMBS-- SOME FOR LOCOMOTION, AND SOME FOR MANIPULATING OBJECTS. IN FACT, A SIX-LIMBED SPECIES COULD STABLY SUPPORT ITS OWN BODY, AND WOULD BE IDEAL FOR LOCOMOTION. DESPITE THE INCREASE IN STABILITY, HOWEVER, ANY LIMBS BEYOND SIX WOULD LIMIT MOBILITY AND SPEED. TAKING PHYSICAL AND MATHEMATICAL RESTRICTIONS INTO CONSIDERATION, THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ADVANCED INTELLIGENT SPECIES EVOLVING FROM ANCESTORS WITH MORE THAN SIX LIMBS IS VERY LOW.

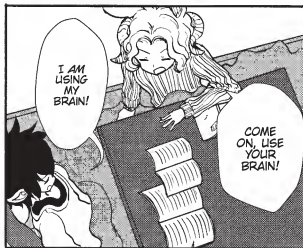
IN ADDITION, AN INTELLIGENT LIFE FORM MUST HAVE A STRUCTURE COMPARABLE TO A HAND. IT WOULD MOST LIKELY HAVE DIGITS LIKE A HUMAN HAND, INCLUDING AN OPPOSABLE DIGIT FOR HOLDING OBJECTS WITH A PRECISION GRIP. IT MUST ALSO HAVE SOMETHING LIKE A PALM THAT ACTS AS BOTH A WORK AREA AND A HOLDING AREA. ALTHOUGH AMPHIBIANFOLK, ANTARCTICANS, AND MAMMALIAN HUMANS ALL TYPICALLY HAVE FIVE DIGITS ON EACH HAND, THAT MAY NOT BE NECESSARILY TRUE FOR AN ALIEN SPECIES. AN AMPHIBIAN WITH EIGHT DIGITS CALLED ACANTHOSTEGA EXISTED DURING THE SAME ERA AS AMPHIBIANS WITH FIVE DIGITS, AND IT COULD HAVE BEEN ONLY CHANCE THAT MADE THE FIVE-DIGIT BODY PLAN MORE SUCCESSFUL.

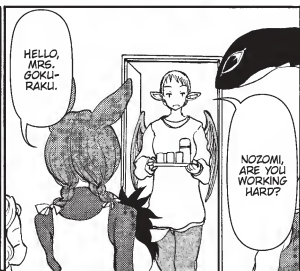
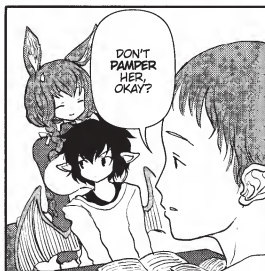
TO ACHIEVE THE PHYSICAL FUNCTION OF THE HAND OF AN ADVANCED INTELLIGENT SPECIES, A LIFE FORM MUST HAVE HAND-LIKE STRUCTURES WITH AN OPPOSABLE DIGIT AND A PALM.

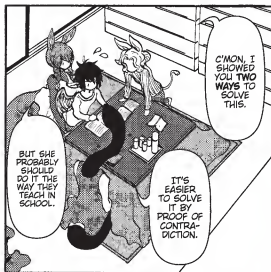
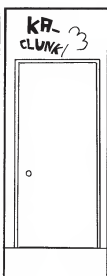


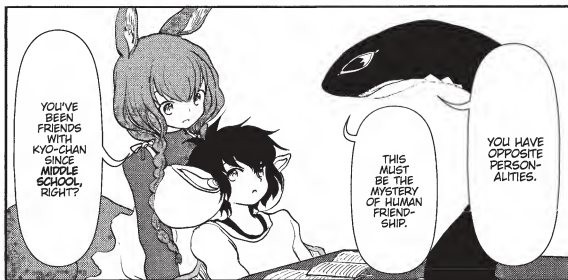
CHAPTER 95

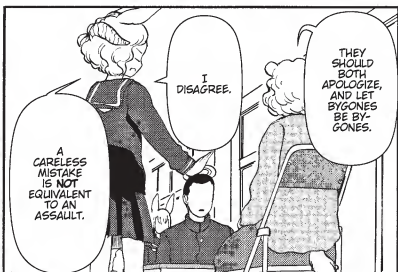
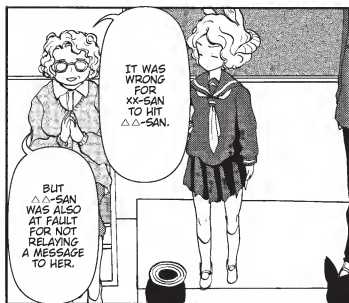
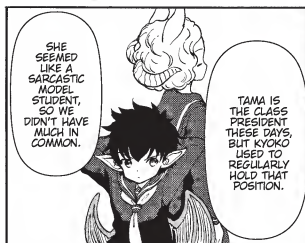


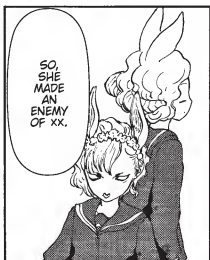






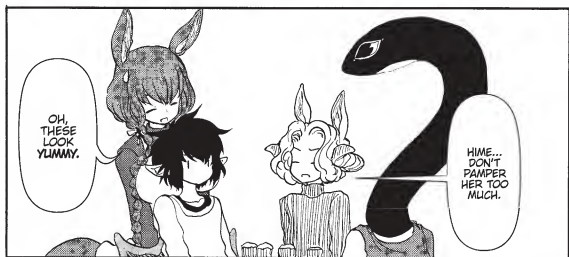
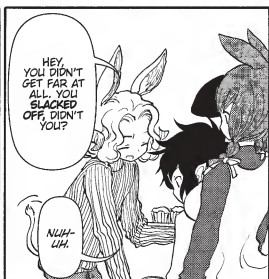
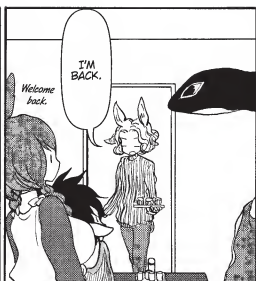












A CentaUr's Life

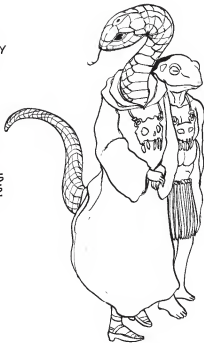
ALIENS - PART 7: ARE ANTARCTICANS ALIENS?

THERE IS A THEORY THAT ANTARCTICANS ARE EXTRATERRESTRIALS DISGUISED AS HUMANS, LURKING IN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND MAJOR COMPANIES, PLOTTING AN INVASION OF EARTH. ALTHOUGH THE MOTIVES OF THE SECRETIVE ANTARCTICAN NATION AND ITS PEOPLE ARE LARGELY UNKNOWN, THIS THEORY IS PURE PROPAGANDA. IN THIS ARTICLE, WE WILL FOCUS ON DEBUNKING THE CONCEPT OF THE ANTARCTICAN ALIEN.

MAMMALIAN HUMANS HAVE NOT YET HAD ACCESS TO ANTARCTICAN BIOLOGICAL SPECIMENS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH. IT SEEMS, HOWEVER, THAT BASED ON THEIR APPEARANCE, BEHAVIORS, AND STORIES, ANTARCTICANS MAY HAVE BRANCHED OFF AT A MUCH EARLIER DATE, AND CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS SPECIES CLOSELY RELATED TO ALLIGATORS OR DINOSAURS. FOR THE RECORD, THE ANCESTORS OF ALLIGATORS, CRLIOTARSI, THRIVED EARLIER THAN DINOSAURS IN THE TRIASSIC PERIOD. THOUGH BIPEDAL DINOSAUR SPECIES DID EXIST, THE MECHANISM OF THE ANTARCTICAN ANKLE JOINT DIFFERS FROM THAT OF DINOSAURS, SUGGESTING THAT PERHAPS THEIR BIDEALISM EVOLVED INDEPENDENTLY.

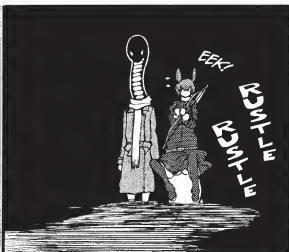
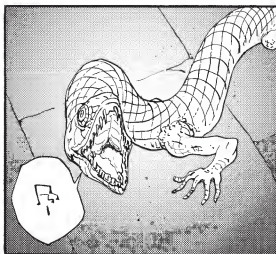
IN ADDITION, OTHER PARTS OF THEIR ANATOMY--ESPECIALLY THEIR SHOULDER BLADES--ARE CLOSELY RELATED TO MAMMALIAN HUMAN ANATOMY. WHILE THE SHOULDER BLADES OF REPTILES ARE LOCATED NEAR THE ABDOMEN, THE SHOULDER BLADES OF BOTH MAMMALIAN HUMANS AND ANTARCTICANS ARE LOCATED ON THE BACK, ALLOWING FOR A MORE EXTENSIVE RANGE OF MOTION. ALTHOUGH THIS SHOULDER MECHANISM TRACES BACK TO AN ANCESTRAL ARBOREAL LIFESTYLE FOR MAMMALIAN HUMANS, ITS ORIGIN FOR ANTARCTICANS IS UNCLEAR DUE TO THEIR MYSTERIOUS HISTORY. IT'S PLAUSIBLE THAT ANTARCTICANS LED A THREE-DIMENSIONAL LIFESTYLE AS WELL, ONLY IN THEIR UNDERGROUND TUNNELS RATHER THAN TREES.

AS YOU CAN SEE, THE PHYSICAL MAKE-UP OF ANTARCTICANS CAN BE PROPERLY EXPLAINED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MAMMALIAN HUMANS. EVEN IF AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL SPECIES EVOLVED IN AN EARTH-LIKE ENVIRONMENT, THE SIMILARITIES IN THEIR APPEARANCE WOULD BE LIMITED TO BASIC ESSENTIAL TRAITS; OTHERWISE, IT'S UNLIKELY THAT THEY WOULD BEAR SUCH STRONG RESEMBLANCE TO HUMANS. THE AMPHIBIANFOLK LEAD PRIMITIVE LIFESTYLES, BUT AREN'T TREATED AS EXTRA-TERRESTRIALS DESPITE BEING THE OTHER NON-MAMMALIAN ADVANCED INTELLIGENT SPECIES ON EARTH. THIS SUGGESTS A FALLACY IN THE THEORY THAT ANTARCTICANS ARE ALIEN INVADERS, WHICH IS LIKELY BORNE FROM PREJUDICE BASED ON THEIR APPEARANCE OR CLASSIFICATION AS A DIFFERENT SPECIES.



CHAPTER 96







TO THE
ESSENCE
OF OUR
CREATION
AND EVOL-
UTION.

SO
WHERE
ARE WE
GOING?



I'M GLAD
THAT
I'M WITH
YOU,
THOUGH.

KYOKO-SAN
HAS LIMITED
PHYSICAL
ABILITY, AND
NOZOMI-
SAN ISN'T
INTERESTED IN
METAPHYSICS.



A LARGER
BRAIN IS
REQUIRED
FOR ADVANCED
INTELLIGENCE.
WE WALK UP-
RIGHT TO
SUPPORT ITS
WEIGHT.

Gravity
↓

Failure
↓

MY
COUNTRY
HAS BEEN
KEEPING IT
QUIET, BUT
OUR BODIES
ARE BASED
ON THE
HUMAN
FORM.

IT
IS A
BRIL-
LIANT
IDEA.

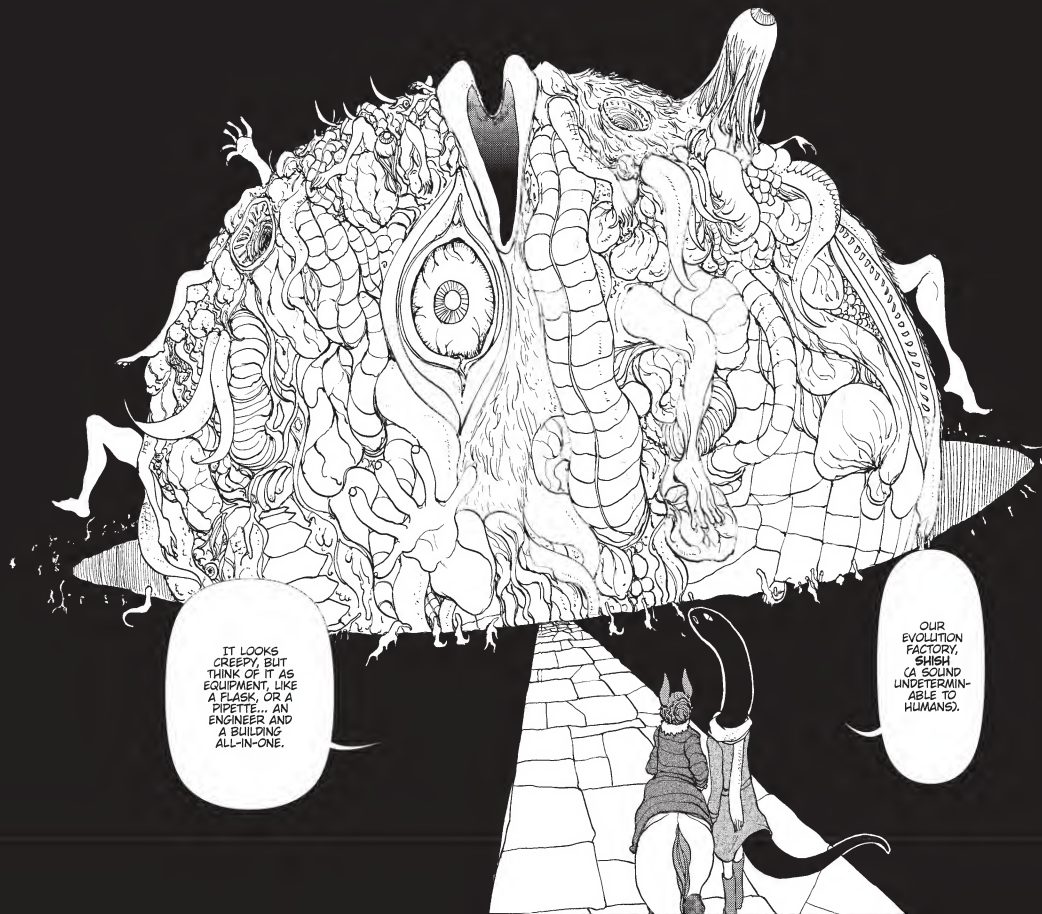


AND
THERE
IS THE
FACTORY.



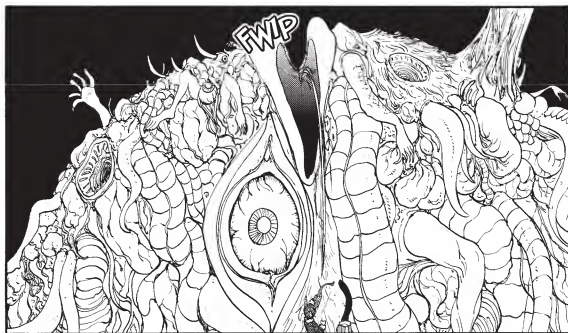
YOU
MAKE IT
SOUND
LIKE A
MANU-
FACTURED
PRODUCT.

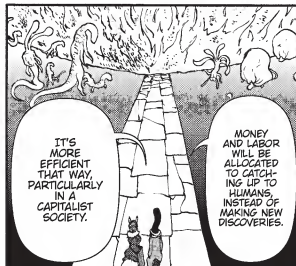
WE
WERE
CREATED
WITH
THE
SAME
GOAL.

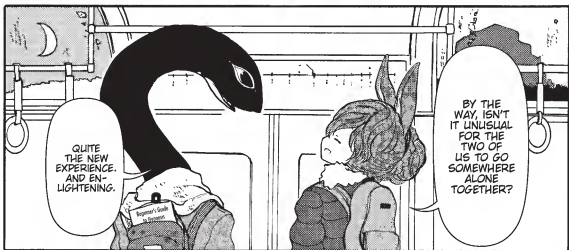


IT LOOKS
CREEPY, BUT
THINK OF IT AS
EQUIPMENT, LIKE
A FLASK, OR A
PIPETTE... AN
ENGINEER AND
A BUILDING
ALL-IN-ONE.

OUR
EVOLUTION
FACTORY,
SHISH
(A SOUND
UNDETERMIN-
ABLE TO
HUMANS).







A CentaUr's Life

ALIENS - PART 8: ALIENS IDENTICAL TO HUMANS

AN AMERICAN MAN NAMED IBUSKI CLAIMED TO HAVE ENCOUNTERED A VENUSIAN; BY HIS ACCOUNT, THE BEAUTIFUL CREATURE WAS A BLONDE, CAUCASIAN, ANGELIC BEING THAT HAD COME TO EARTH AS A MESSENGER OF PEACE. ACCORDING TO HIM, SHE STATED THAT SHE WOULD NOT MAKE AN OFFICIAL APPEARANCE UNTIL NUCLEAR WEAPONS WERE ABOLISHED AND WORLD PEACE WAS ACHIEVED. UNTIL THAT TIME, SHE WOULD ONLY DELIVER MESSAGES TO CHOSEN PEOPLE.

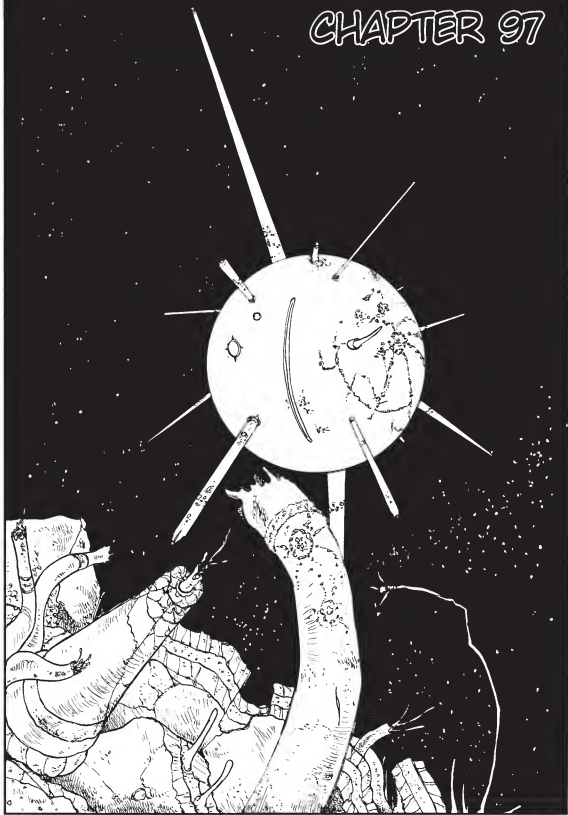
VENUS WAS ONCE THOUGHT TO BE A WORLD CAPABLE OF BEARING LIFE, BUT A PROBE SENT BY THE FARMER'S, LABORER'S AND SOLDIER'S FEDERATION OF SOVIET REPUBLICS REVEALED THAT VENUS IS A BARREN PLANET WITH HIGH TEMPERATURES AND SUBSTANTIAL ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE, MAKING LIFE UNLIKELY. BECAUSE OF THIS, IBUSKI'S NARRATIVE OF HIS ALIEN ENCOUNTER IS NOT SEEN AS SCIENTIFICALLY SIGNIFICANT AND IS RATHER WIDELY CONSIDERED A HOAX. AS WITH MOST HOAXES, THERE ARE SOME WHO STILL BELIEVE, PERHAPS CHOOSING TO PERCEIVE ALIENS AS GOD-LIKE CREATURES.

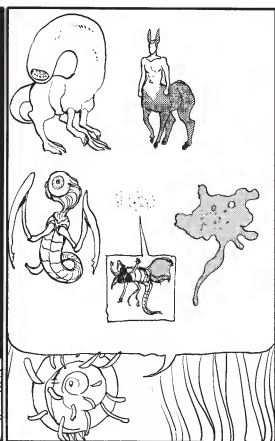
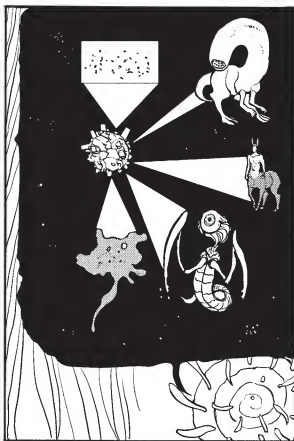
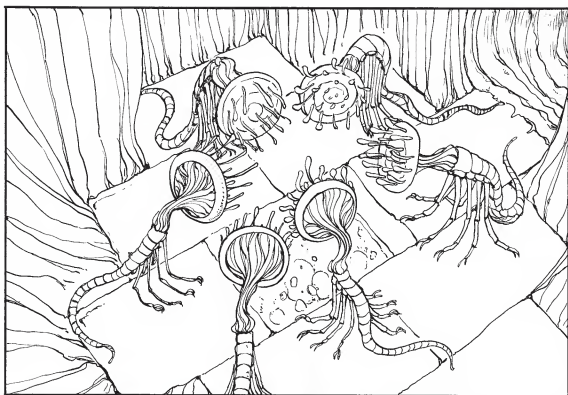
STORIES OF ALIENS TEND TO BE LUMPED IN WITH THE OCCULT, BUT THIS IS NOT ENTIRELY ACCURATE. THE OCCULT IS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY GNOSTICISM, WHICH CARRIES A CONVICTION THAT THE SPIRITUAL WORLD EXISTS, DISTINCT FROM AND SUPERIOR TO THE MATERIAL WORLD. THEY BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE SOULS FROM ANOTHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE TRAPPED IN OUR MATERIAL WORLD, AND THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF TRUTH CAN FREE THEM. IN OTHER WORDS, SOME OCCULT BELIEVERS CONSIDER ALIENS TO BE GODS OF TRUTH. JUST AS IT IS FUTILE TO THINK ABOUT THE EXACT PHYSICAL ALTITUDE OF HEAVEN, IT IS USELESS TO APPLY SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES TO THESE BELIEFS. OCCULT BELIEVERS SHOULD BE EDUCATED WITH A LOGICAL PERSPECTIVE AND ENCOURAGED TO ABANDON UNENLIGHTENED FANTASIES.

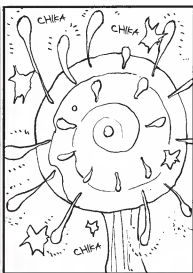
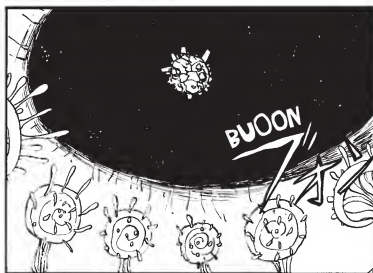
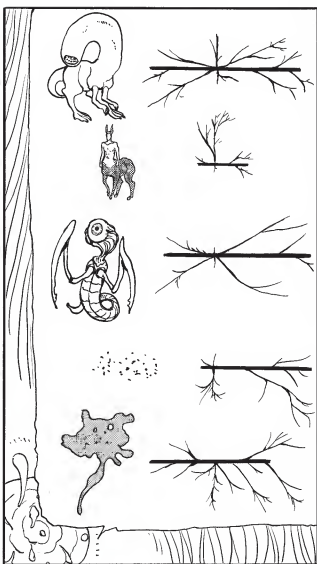
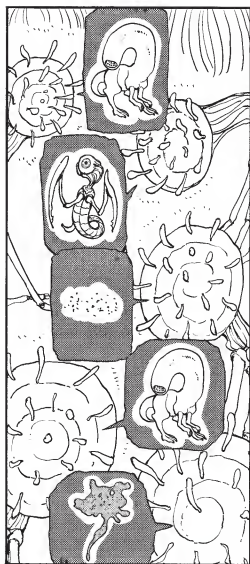
IT'S INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT IBUSKI HIMSELF WAS A BLONDE, CAUCASIAN, ANGELIC BEING...AND UNSUCCESSFUL SCIENCE FICTION NOVELIST.

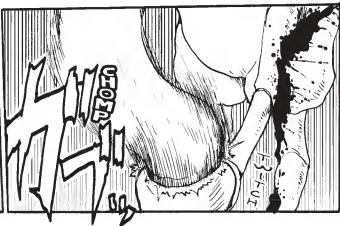
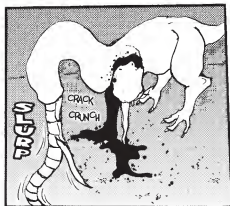
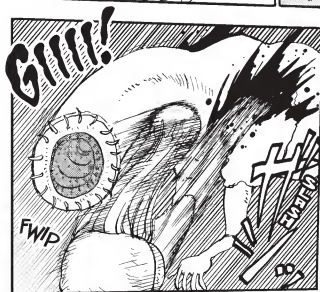
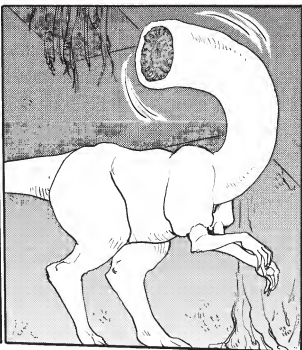
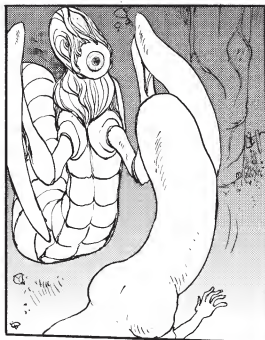


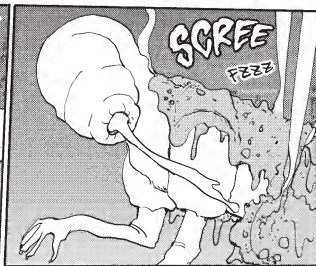
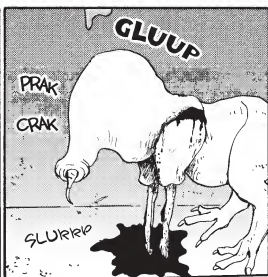
CHAPTER 97

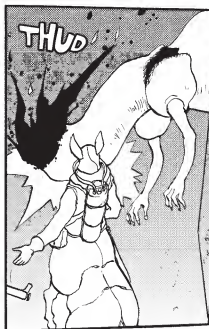
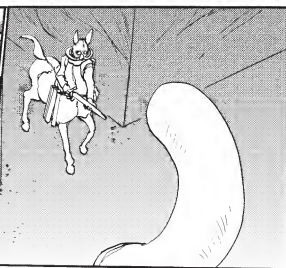
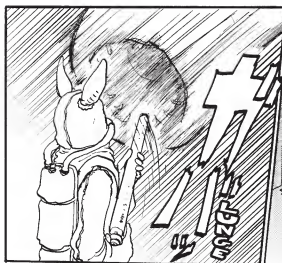


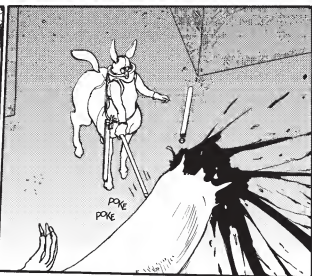
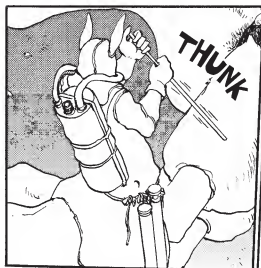
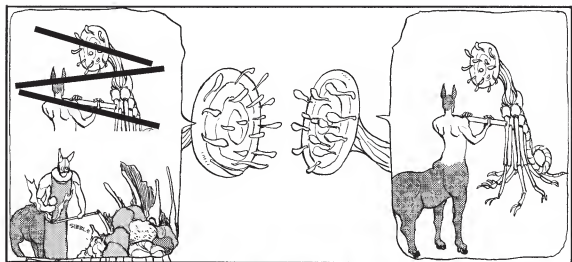


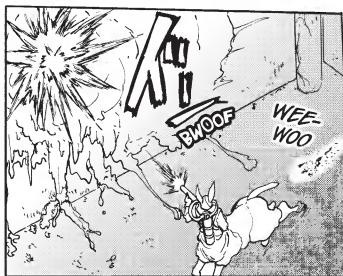
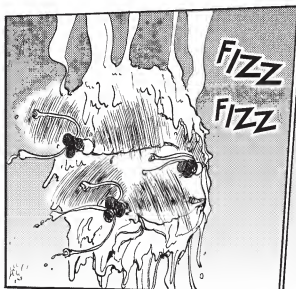
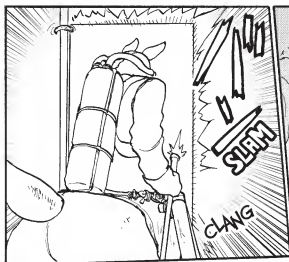


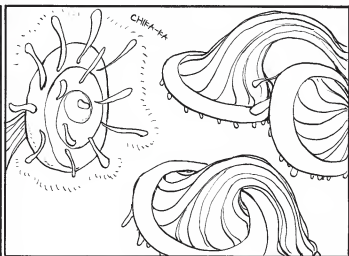
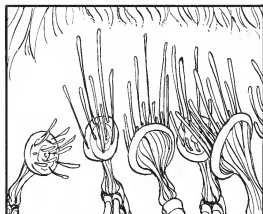
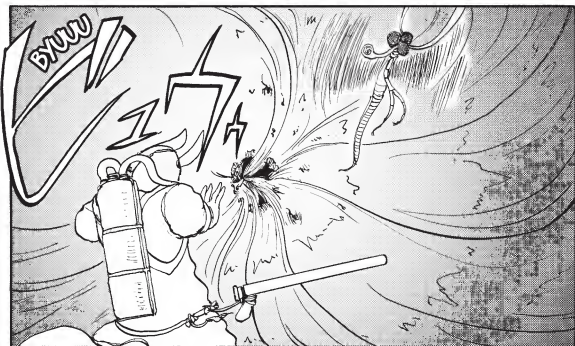


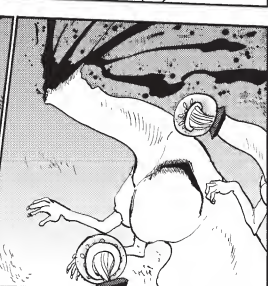
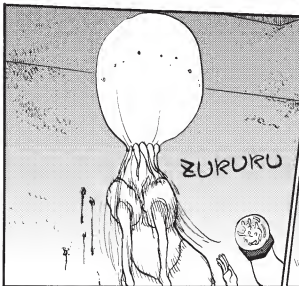
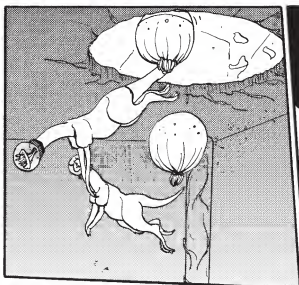
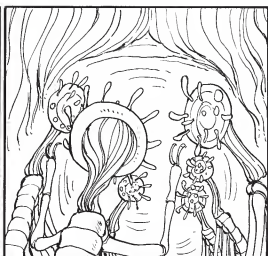
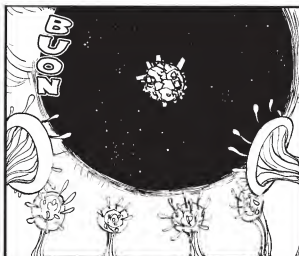


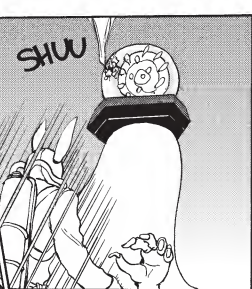
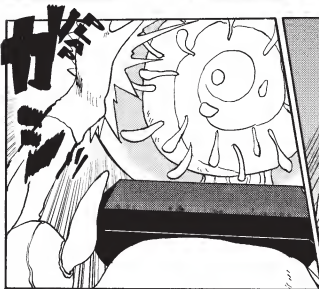
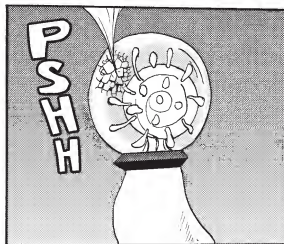
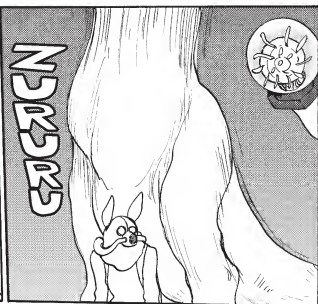
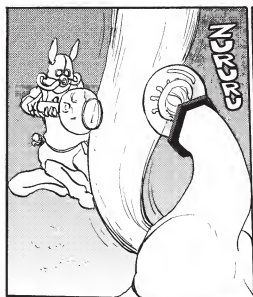


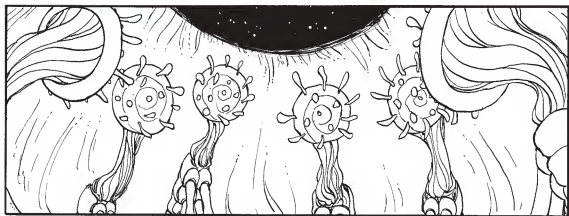
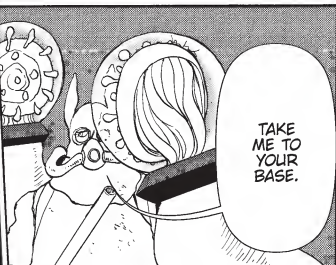
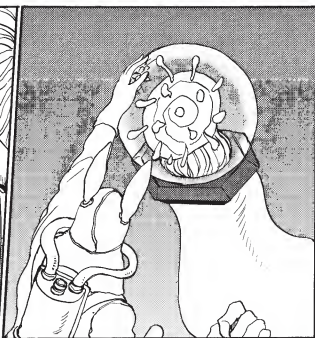
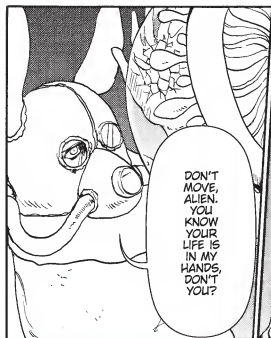


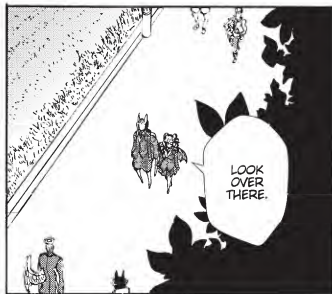
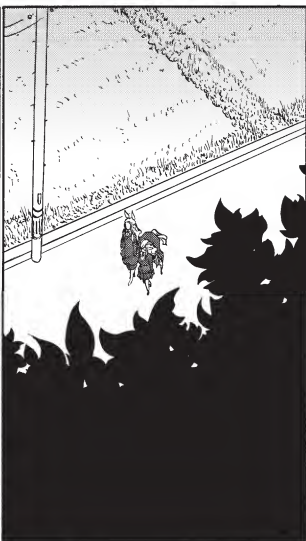


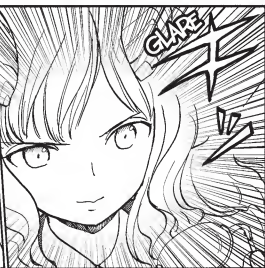
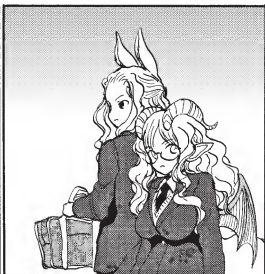


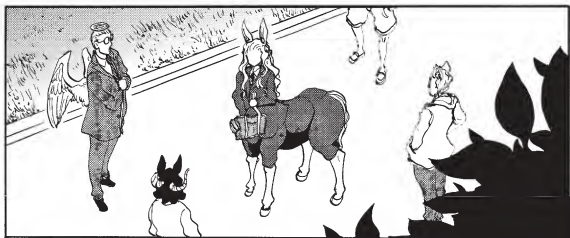


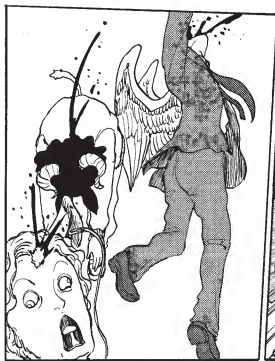
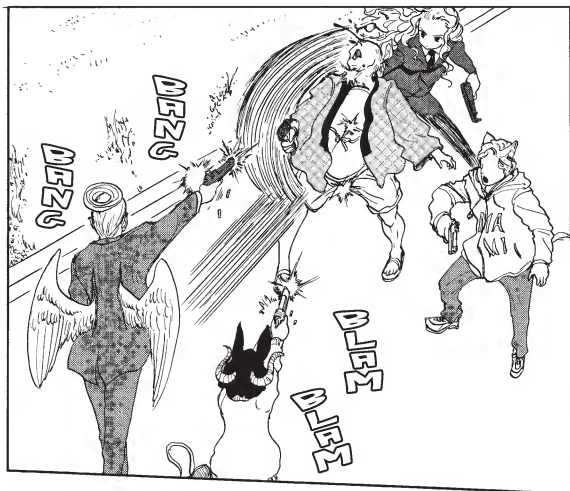


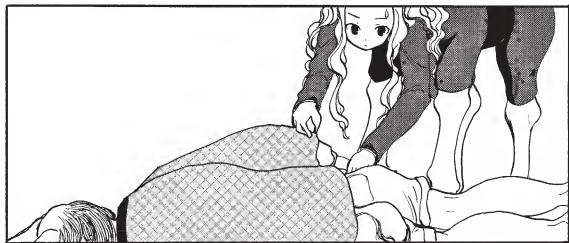
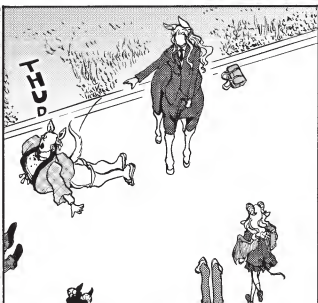












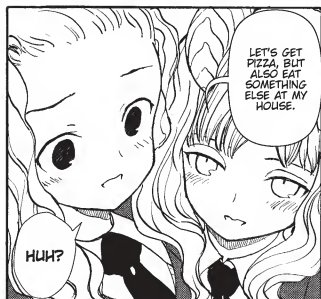
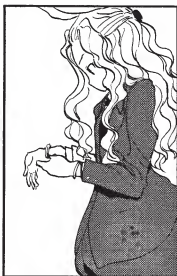


WHAT?
DON'T
WORRY.

EVEN
IF THEY
SUSPECT
US, MY
GRAND-
FATHER
CAN PULL
A FEW
STRINGS.

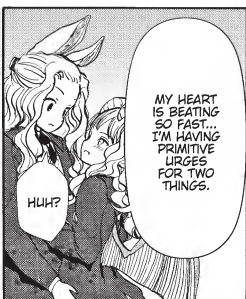


HELLO,
POLICE?
THERE
HAS
BEEN A
SHOOT-
ING.



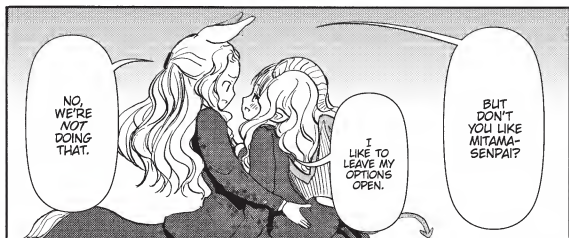
LET'S GET
PIZZA, BUT
ALSO EAT
SOMETHING
ELSE AT MY
HOUSE.

HUH?



HUH?

MY HEART
IS BEATING
SO FAST...
I'M HAVING
PRIMITIVE
URGES
FOR TWO
THINGS.



NO,
WE'RE
NOT
DOING
THAT.

I
LIKE TO
LEAVE MY
OPTIONS
OPEN.

BUT
DON'T
YOU LIKE
MITAMA-
SENPAI?

A CentaUr's Life

ALIENS - PART 9: ALIEN ENCOUNTERS

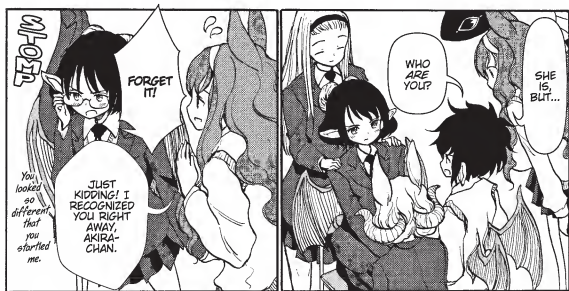
UFO LITERALLY STANDS FOR "UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT," BUT SOME USE THE TERM SYNONYMOUSLY WITH "ALIEN SPACESHIP." UFO SIGHTINGS, AS WELL AS CLAIMS OF ALIEN ENCOUNTERS, INCREASED DRAMATICALLY IN THE POST-WORLD WAR II ERA, LIKELY DUE TO THE RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESSION OF AIRCRAFT DURING THE WAR. ALTHOUGH AIRPLANES WERE INVENTED IN 1903, WWII IS WHEN THEY TRULY HIT THEIR STRIDE--IT BECAME COMMON TO SEND AN AIRBORNE STRIKE FORCE ACROSS THE OCEAN TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK OR DESTROY A WHOLE CITY WITH ITS FIREPOWER ALONE. INDEED, THE FIRST ATOMIC BOMB TO ANNIHILATE A CITY WAS DROPPED FROM A PLANE. DURING THE COLD WAR ERA, AIRCRAFT LOADED WITH THE PROMISE OF NUCLEAR WARFARE RULED THE SKIES, WHICH WERE NO LONGER THE PEACEFUL DOMAIN OF CLOUDS AND BIRDS; IT HAD BECOME A BATTLEGROUND.

IF YOU WATCH THE SKY, YOU MAY SPOT MANY OBJECTS THAT DON'T APPEAR TO BE AIRPLANES. THESE OBJECTS ARE REPORTED AS UFOS, AND ARE ASSUMED BY SOME TO BE ALIEN SHIPS...AND IF THERE ARE ALIEN SHIPS IN THE SKIES, THEN WHAT'S TO STOP THEM FROM LANDING ON EARTH? THOSE WHO CLAIM TO HAVE HAD ENCOUNTERS SPEAK OF ALIENS (WHO TYPICALLY SPEAK ENGLISH FLUENTLY) THAT DO THINGS LIKE STEAL COOKIES OR STOCKINGS, OR EVEN ASSAULT INNOCENT PEOPLE. THEY ALSO PURPORTEDLY ENJOY LEADING PEOPLE IN CHASES, SOAKING IN HOT SPRINGS, OR MUTILATING FARM ANIMALS. THESE ALIENS SEEM TO COME IN VARIOUS SIZES, RANGING FROM UNDER AN INCH TO OVER SEVEN FEET TALL, AND WERE ONCE IDENTIFIED AS MONSTERS OR FAIRIES.



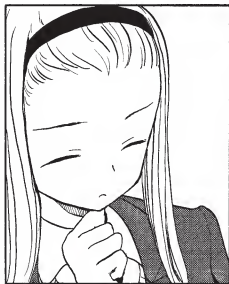
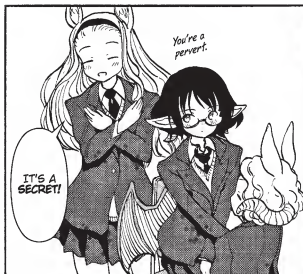


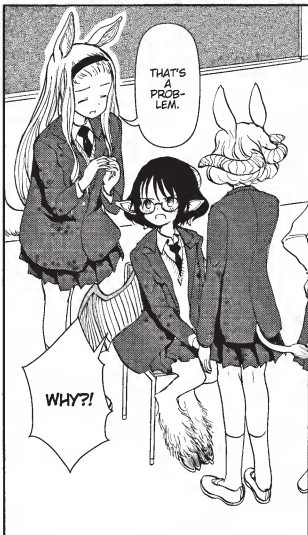
CHAPTER 98

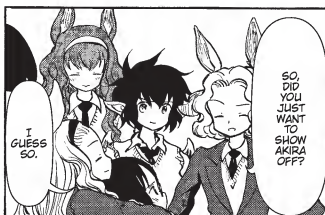












A CentaUr's Life

ALIENS - PART 10: WHAT ARE ALIENS?

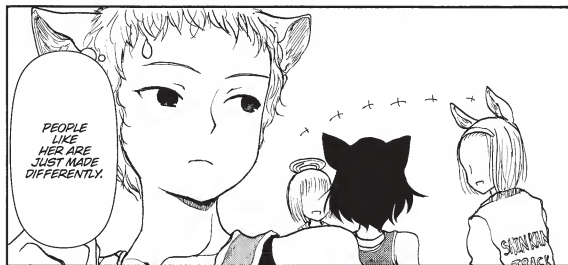
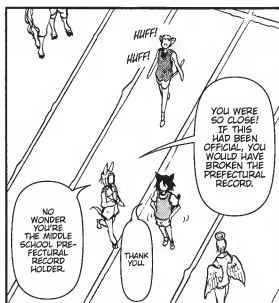
A RECENT ALIEN PEEPING INCIDENT IN K-CITY MADE HEADLINES: AN ALIEN, WHO ALLEGEDLY PEEPED INTO THE BATHROOM OF A K-CITY RESIDENCE, WAS CHASED AWAY BY A FAMILY MEMBER WHO HAPPENED TO BE A CENTAUR TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETE. THE ALIEN APPEARED TO BE BIPEDAL, BUT STILL MANAGED TO OUTRUN AN ATHLETIC CENTAUR, WHO HAD CHASED IT AT FULL SPEED. TO PERFORM SUCH A FEAT, THE ALIEN MUST HAVE BEEN AN EXTRAORDINARY RUNNER, TRULY SO FAST AS TO SEEM ABSURD; ALMOST AS ABSURD AS THE IDEA THAT AN ALIEN WOULD PEEP INTO A HOUSE. IT'S TEMPTING TO DISMISS SUCH SILLY STORIES AS IRRATIONAL HOAXES OR FANTASIES, OR ATTEMPT TO GIVE SOME EXPLANATION FOR THEM, BUT KEEPING THE REPORTS IN THEIR ORIGINAL FORM IS THE MOST LOGICAL COURSE OF ACTION.

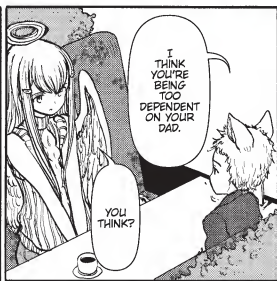
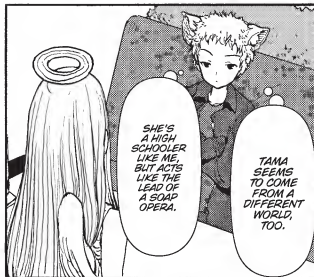
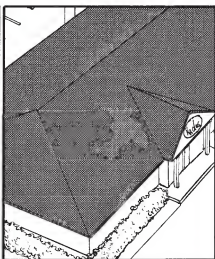
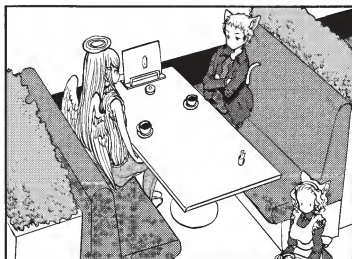
JUST AS COLLECTING FOLKTALES REVEALS THE STORYTELLER'S WAY OF LIFE, AN ALIEN STORY REVEALS THE EMOTIONAL STATE OF THE PERSON REPORTING IT. RECORD EVENTS EXACTLY AS THEY ARE REPORTED, AND CONFIRM THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS WITH EXPERIMENTS LATER. IN SCIENCE, THE MATERIALS USED AND STEPS TAKEN TO REACH A CONCLUSION ARE OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE.

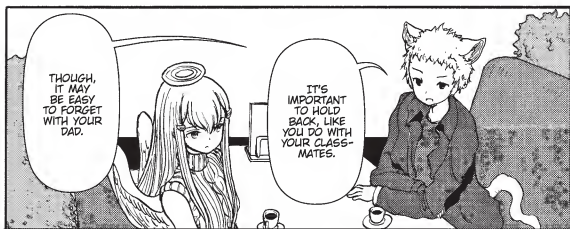
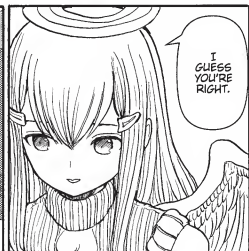
LOOKING AT THE WORLD PURELY FROM A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE, ONE IS LIMITED TO THE PRECONCEPTIONS OF AN EARLIER TIME, BEFORE THE GREAT ENLIGHTENMENTS OF SCIENCE. IF ONE CAN OBSERVE THE WORLD AROUND THEM IN A SCIENTIFIC FASHION USING OBJECTIVE CRITERIA, THEN ONE CAN UNLOCK THE TRUE BEAUTY OF THE UNIVERSE IN ITS PUREST FORM. YOU, TOO, CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES OF YOUR NATION! OUR COUNTRY'S INVESTMENT IN SCIENCE AND MILITARY FORCES PROMOTE GLOBAL EQUALITY, DEMOCRACY, AND PEACE.

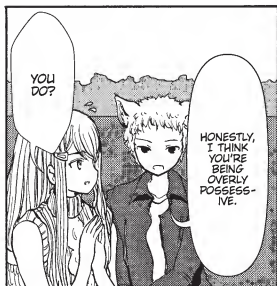




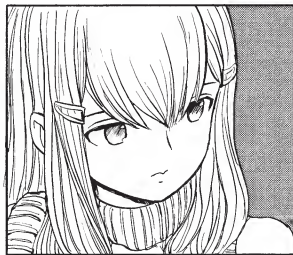


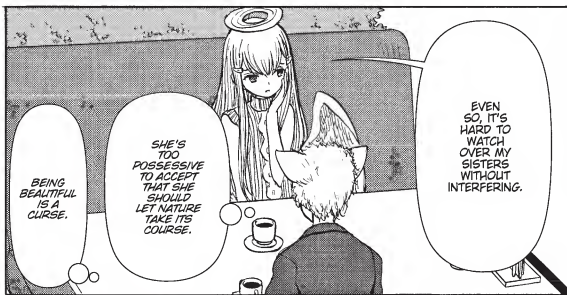
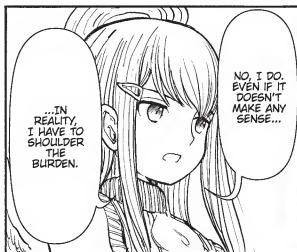
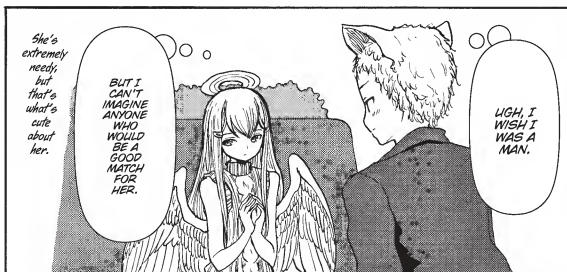


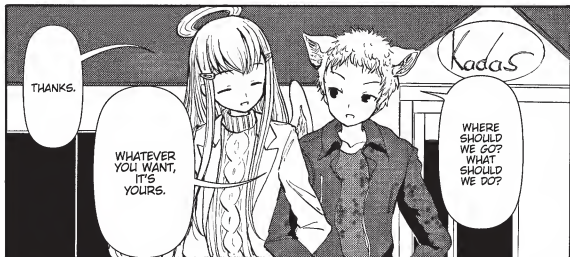
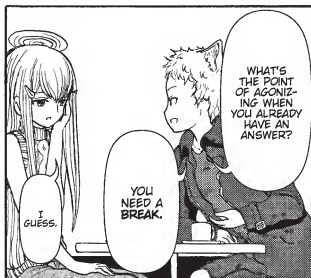


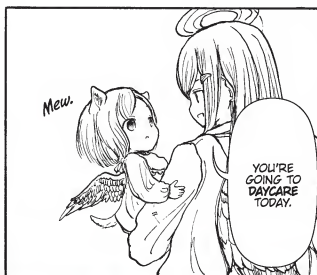


HONESTLY,
I THINK
YOU'RE
BEING
OVERLY
POSSESS-
IVE.



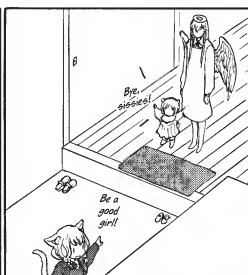






Mew.

YOU'RE
GOING TO
DAYCARE
TODAY.



Bye,
sissies!

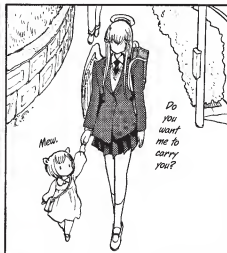
Be a
good
girl!



WOO!
YAY!

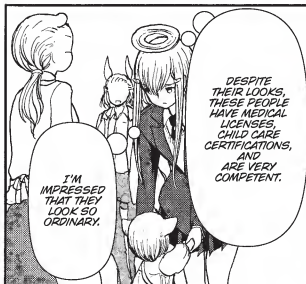
GOOD
MORNING.

National
Daycare
Center
Sakuraton



Mew.

Do
you
want
me to
carry
you?



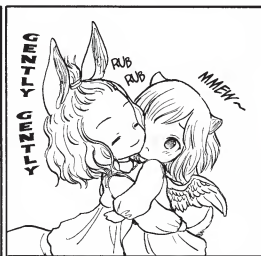
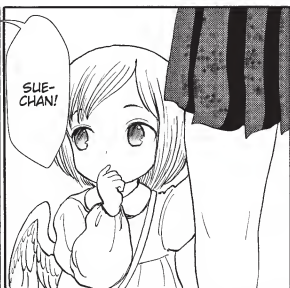
I'M
IMPRESSED
THAT THEY
LOOK SO
ORDINARY.

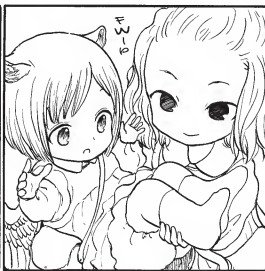
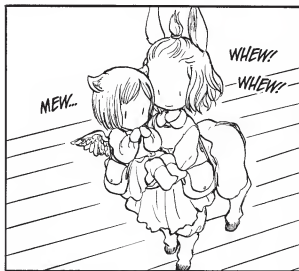
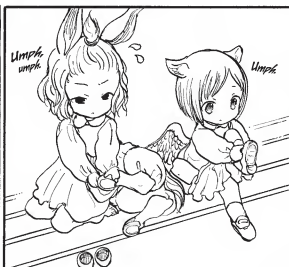
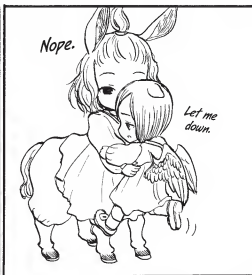
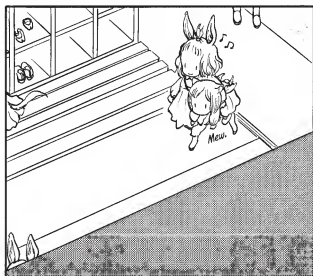
DESPITE
THEIR LOOKS,
THESE PEOPLE
HAVE MEDICAL
LICENSES,
CHILD CARE
CERTIFICATIONS,
AND
ARE VERY
COMPETENT.

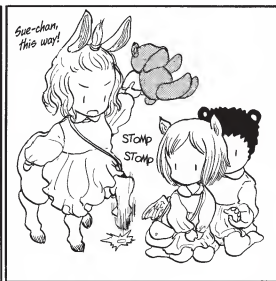
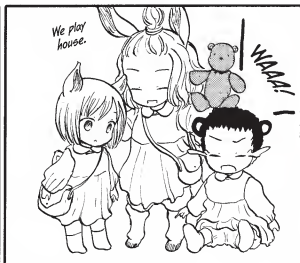
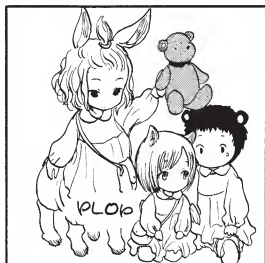
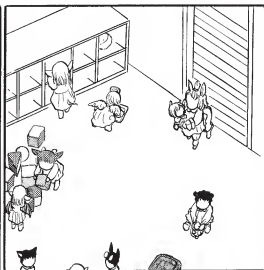
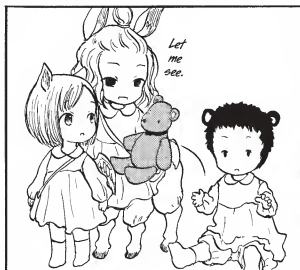


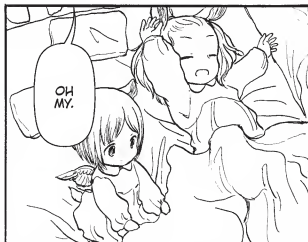
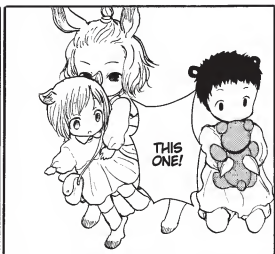
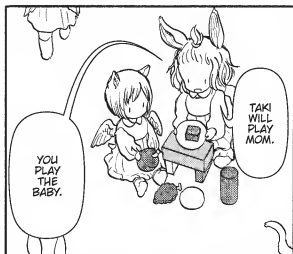
SUE-
CHAN,
SAY
GOOD
MORNING.

GOOD
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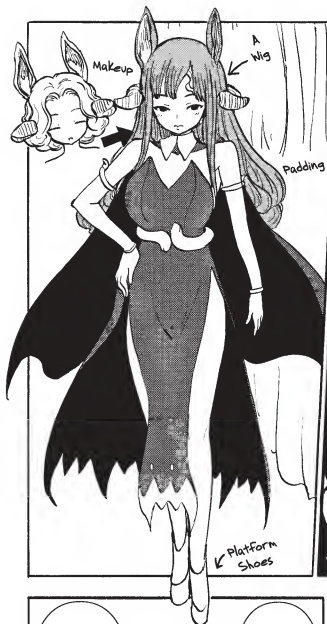






A CentaUr's Life





THE MEIJI RESTORATION

In 1867 (Keio 3), the Edo Bakufu restored the control of the country to the emperor, and the Meiji government was established in what is now known as the Meiji Restoration. Although many daimyo were relocated, eliminated, or consolidated, the remainder continued to govern the domains for a period. When prefectures were established in place of domains, however, there was an initial wave of prefectural consolidation. It was at this time that Hidachi Prefecture (mainly the northern region) and Niihari Prefecture (mainly the southern region, including Kanata) were established. The modern prefecture of Hidachi was formed four years later, after the second wave of consolidation. How did these political events affect the land of Kanata?

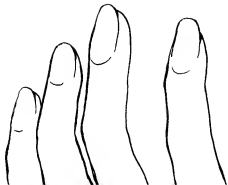
The Meiji Restoration abolished traditional lords not only in Kanata, but nationwide. The daimyo that remained loyal to the Edo Bakufu were sent to remote areas, and their former domains were transformed into prefectures headed by the government. The daimyo that complied with the new government, on the other hand, remained in positions of power for some time. They continued as appointed governors, with the names of their domains simply changing to prefectures instead; their senior retainers became commissioners, and magistrates became political officers. In the second wave of prefectural consolidation, however, domains were completely abolished and the former daimyo were relieved of their positions. Control of the prefectures was then granted to governors appointed by the central government, which had been established by the group of low-ranking samurai that brought forth the revolution. Village administrators were appointed as district officials under the new government to unify villages, and samurai had become ordinary citizens.

Some erroneously consider this series of events to be the revolution of species. While it's true that many high-ranking samurai (who were members of the ruling class) were centaurs and many low-ranking samurai and peasants were non-centaurs, the conclusion that power was transferred from centaurs to non-centaurs is not accurate. At the end of the Sengoku period, those in power were not exclusively centaurs; in fact, a considerable number of centaur samurai had returned to farming. In addition, the measures taken by the Meiji government did not apply to the entire race. What this implies is that the Meiji Restoration was merely the reformation of the social structure, which had nothing to do with the races.

If all of this happened to the ruling class, then how were peasants, who made up most of the population of Kanata, treated? In 1871, the government granted rights to farmers; prior to this time, rice farming was almost mandatory (mainly for tax purposes) while commercial farming was heavily regulated. With the end of a society based on rice crops, farmers were free to do as they wished with their goods as long as they paid a land tax twice a year.

Freedom, democratic rights, and equality of all people were characteristics of the Meiji period. As a side note, there was a place that changed its name from Kimihara to Tamihara.

Freedom, however, can be a double-edged sword. Though the Edo-period power of samurai to confiscate wealth had been abolished, Meiji period farmers were still forced to pay taxes at a constant rate, regardless of fluctuation in crop yields. Additionally, common lands became a thing of the past following a comprehensive survey and issuance of land titles; tenants were thereafter prohibited from harvesting firewood, or any other raw materials, as they had in the past. For these reasons, freedom required clever adaptations to the environment to survive.



THE RISE OF SERICULTURE

Meanwhile, the wealthy were also trying to adapt to the new world. Taxes in those times were on land holdings (rather than a modern income tax), but traditional rice farming practices had limited the peasants' production capabilities. Since the conventional methods of working the land had reached their limits, the only option left to the wealthy who wished to maintain their fortunes was to establish new industries.

Some farm villages attempted to cultivate new commercial crops, such as tea and sumac, but the most popular new industry was sericulture (silk farming), especially in the Kanata region. Export goods were necessary to support and expand Japan's military forces, and silk thread was one of the few commodities with high export demand.

The shrine at the center of the sericultural shrine network is in the Kanto region, which indicates that silk farming has been done in Kanata since ancient times. The prohibition of mulberry cultivation during the Edo period led to the collapse of silk production, until it was limited to only hobbyists raising silkworms with what wild mulberry they could gather. This changed with the Meiji agricultural reforms, but new silk farmers were forced to use trial and error to master the difficult task of maintaining temperature in silkworm rooms, which required both manpower and fuel. Even when farmers could successfully produce cocoons, the brokers drove down their prices. Nevertheless, Kanata--as a farm-heavy area--enjoyed vast profits from silk farming, allowing it to become self-sustaining.

Goods that people used to produce at home, such as kimono, oil, sake, soy sauce, or tobacco, could now be inexpensively mass-produced and distributed, but farmers had to deny themselves some of these amenities to purchase nitrogen or phosphate fertilizers instead.

Those who turned a profit from silk farming could avoid doing back-breaking work in the fields...an arrangement preferred by many.

※ Some may disagree, but remember this: farming equipment did not yet exist at that time. Coming from a family of farmers, I would personally much rather be a writer.





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story and art by KEI MURAYAMA

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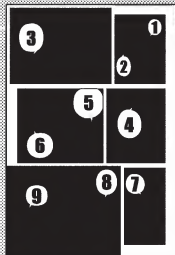
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This book reads from *right to left*, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



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